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January No. 12 £1.95 US\$4.50

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SHERLOCK HOLMES

Great games
I've played in

CIVILISATION?

Elementary, says
our answer to
Kenneth Clarke

AXIS AND ALLIES

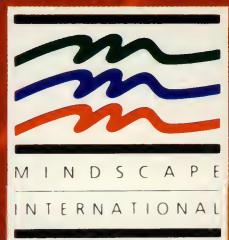
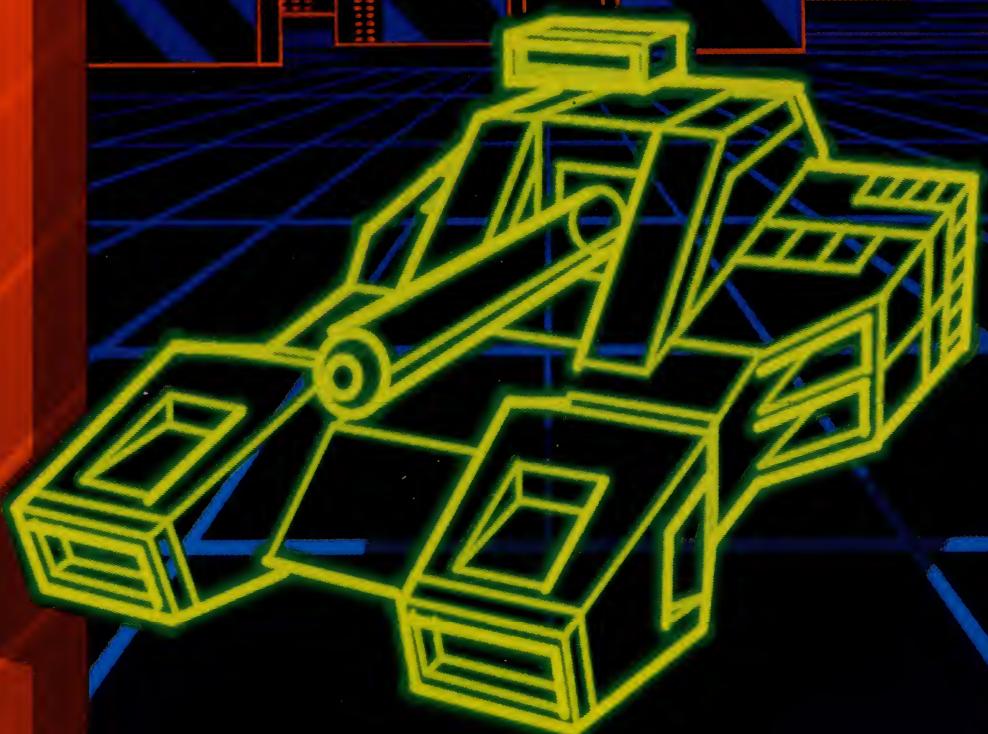
The case of the
missing options

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Rebel Charge at Chickamauga, plus soccer management special.

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ISSN 0955-4424

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Printer: Worcestershire Web Offset Ltd, Berry Hill Ind Est, Droitwich, Worcs WR9 9BL

Distributor: Diamond Distribution
0424 430422

Games International, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing, London W5 5DF.

01-567 7740

Fax: 01-579 6485

Games International is an Ealing comedy, produced by (20th Century) Foxray Ltd. Reg No 2270529. Vat No 495 4478 93

UK subscriptions - £15 for 12 issues. European subscriptions - £18 for 12 issues. US subscriptions - £22 for 12 issues. Write to the above address or fill in the form on page 58.

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UPFRONT

Many thanks for the tremendous response to the Games International *Glasnost* exercise. We refer, of course, to our reader survey ('Readers Revenge') published in our last issue. To those of you who haven't yet replied, *please* do so. Apart from giving us an idea as to which direction the magazine could take, your comments are great fun to read.

We will be offering our own response to the survey results in our next issue.

Letter of the year

Gary F White (issue #5)

Things they didn't say in '88

'I'm not buying any more games'
— Alan R Moon

'This game is fine as it is'
— Derek Carver

'Winning is the only thing'
— Mike Siggins

'Arsenal were unlucky'
— John Harrington (a little known Spurs supporter)

'Tact and diplomacy are the best ways to solve a problem'
— Brian Walker (a little known editor)

'Marketing is not important'
— Gary F White

'We all love Rolecall'
— GI Readers Revenge respondents

'Games about presidential assassinations are tasteless'
— The UK's leading authority on board-games

'Medieval games bore me to tears'
— Julian Musgrave, Wotan Games

Star Ratings

Top class game. Highly recommended

Very good game. Worth buying

Worth a look

**

Only if the subject interests you



A true turkey

REST IN PEACE

Villa Games
Jordan Games
Commissatio
Quest Games
Intellectual Pursuits
Tekumel Games

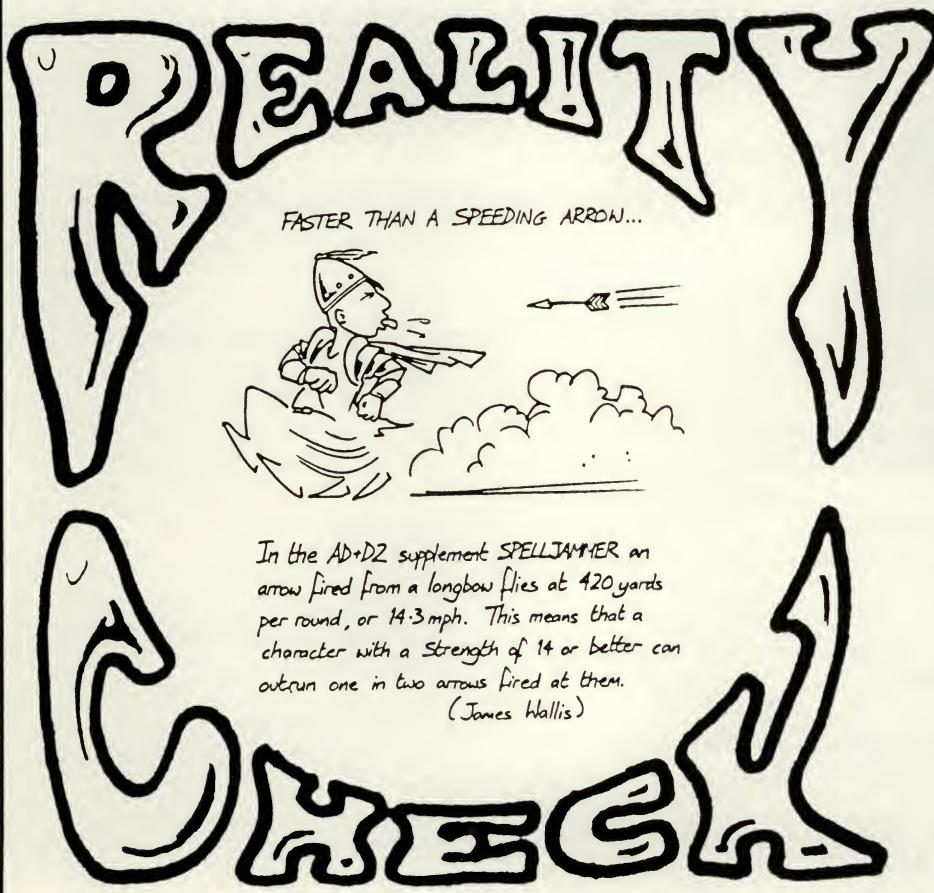
ISSUE 12

One major effect of the survey can be seen already in this issue: no charts. Probably the most inoffensive item in the whole mag, and yet the one that most aroused your ire. Sniper has not been shot, nor has Rebound been bounced. They'll both be back in our next issue.

The first Game of the Month of the new decade is *Echelon*, a beautifully presented and original game. In the war-games section it's nice to see GDW's *A House Divided* back in print after all those years, while newcomers *Europe Aflame* and *Usuthu* are both deemed worthy of your attention. Not much happening on the software front, apart from the *Full Metal Planete* conversion, though we'll more than make up for that in our next issue as a whole truckload of new releases get the big boot.

Three major features this month: The Big Game Hunter continues his trek through gaming history, while Kevin Jacklin offers the definitive gaming guide to that most definitive of 'tecs. Steve Jones follows up his 1830 piece with a look at another of Francis Tresham's games: *Civilization*.

Anybody, computer owner or not, with an interest in the World's Greatest Game should not fail to read John Harrington's Soccer Special — a guide to soccer (software) management games. Apart from exposing the hype of the computer mag reviews, John also exhibits a fine sense of humour, in spite of being a Spurs supporter. Or then again, maybe because of it.



THE CLASS OF 89

The following games were rated with four or five stars last year:

GENERAL GAMES

À La Carte
ASG Baseball
Choice
Dark Cults
Deal Me In
Dexad
Family Business
Favoriten
Full Metal Planete
International Cricket
Liar's Dice
Mertwig's Maze
Metric Mile
New York, New York
Pole Position
Schoko & Co
Stack
Targui
Thomas The Tank Engine
Topple
Traber Derby
Tricky
Trump
Wicketz

WARGAMES

Ancients
Campaigns of Robert E Lee
Desert Falcons
Gulf Strike
Hitler's Last Gamble
Main Battle Tank
Red Storm Rising
Sniper! Bughunter
Test of Arms
Turning Point Stalingrad
West of Alamein
Wingleader
World in Flames

Lords of the Rising Sun
Main Battle Tank
Millennium 2.2
Omega
Red Lightning
Sim City
Stellar Crusade
TV Sports Football

ROLEGAMES

Ars Magica
Broken Covenant of Calebais (Ars Magica)
Conan (GURPS)
4th Succession War (Battletech)
Ice Age (GURPS)
Pilot's Almanac (Harn)
Trollpak (RuneQuest)
Swords & Glory Tékumel
Witch World (GURPS)

COMPUTER GAMES

Curse of the Azure Bonds
Earl Weaver Baseball
Fire Brigade
Jack Nicklaus Golf

NEXT ISSUE:

SPORTS SPECIAL

Mike Siggins gets into Clubhouse Baseball.

A new cycling sensation from Holland. The Soccer Special continues with reviews of more football management games for the computer.

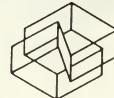
Three new American Football computer games reviewed, plus a Superbowl feature looking at how sims match up to the real thing.

PLUS

Do-it-yourself game from Sid Sackson, new releases from Earl's Court & Nuremberg, Charles Vasey at the Seige of Jerusalem, Paul Mason fighting Bandit Kings of Ancient China.

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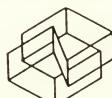
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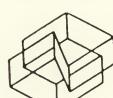
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REVIEWS

GENERAL GAMES

GAME OF THE MONTH

ECHELON

DESIGNER UNKNOWN

PUBLISHED BY
THE GREAT GAMES
COMPANY

PRICE £19.99

*****^{1/2}

At last a quiz game for 2-6 players that does not require the players to dredge obscure facts from the depths of their minds in order to gain points or pieces of plastic. Instead, this is rather like taking a peek at the question paper before sitting the exam. If you can read and have a reasonable short-term memory then you can play Echelon. However, there is more to this game than simply answering questions, as we shall discover later.

The central theme of the game is literature. Players read and inwardly digest one of 286 excerpts from 'the great works' and then attempt to answer questions on what they have read. The questions vary in difficulty and, within restrictions, players select the level of question that they wish to answer.

**UPPER ECHELON**

The black, moulded plastic board consists of a central hexagon from which radiates six arms or ladders. Each ladder contains six 'echelons' or rungs each with three diamond shaped spaces. As questions are answered, coloured plastic pieces are placed on these spaces. The rungs are identified by letters which spell the word 'echelon', the first 'e' being on the central hex and the 'n' on the furthest extremity of each ladder.

There are seven gold pieces, each with an identifying letter, which are placed in the centre of the board at the start of the game but more about them later. The rest of the equipment comprises 143 extract cards, with a passage of literature on each side, 286 question cards, six trays to hold the pieces, six plastic folders, a sand timer and a pack of 'echelon' playing cards. The diamond shaped plastic pieces come in six colours, each representing a different rung; for example red represents 'n', orange 'o' and so on.

Each player receives a storage tray, three of each coloured piece and a plastic folder. The 'echelon' playing cards are shuffled and seven dealt to each player. The remainder of the pack is placed face

down on the table. Players then select an extract card and have five minutes to read and remember the passage that they have chosen. The appropriate question cards are either held by a non-playing question master or given to the player on the left of the one reading that particular passage. At the end of five minutes, the extract cards are placed in the plastic folders and laid face down on the table. Now the game really begins.

SANDS OF TIME

The first player lays an 'echelon' card and replenishes his hand from the pack. Most of these cards contain a letter and when played that person is asked a question from the corresponding category. The simplest questions are 'n', rising in difficulty to the ultimate 'e'. A Wild card allows the player to choose the category; an Echelon card gives the opportunity to answer one question from each category starting with the lowest and continuing until an incorrect answer is given.

A Revision card means that every player has 45 seconds, measured by the sand timer, to reread their extract. Believe me, this can be invaluable as the game progresses and one's memory begins to fade. Correct answers are rewarded by placing

the appropriate diamond, plain side up, on the rung. When wrong answers are given, the piece is placed 'X' side up on the space. Players can attempt to answer incorrect answers correctly later in the game. There are three questions in each category or rung. When a player gives the right answer to the third question he may take the appropriate gold piece from the centre of the board, if it is still available, and place it on the third space, thereby gaining bonus points.

The game ends when one player correctly answers his most difficult question and takes the large, gold 'e' piece from the centre of the board. A player must have at least one correct answer in each rung before attempting this final question. There is one further restriction: before being allowed to attempt this question, at least one other player must have completed his sixth 'echelon' or rung. This prevents the game from being ended too quickly, especially if a player is successful with his Echelon playing card. At the end of the game, players tot up their scores, scoring one point for each correct answer, with bonuses for gold pieces, and a minus point for each incorrect answer still

showing. Obviously the player with the most points wins.

Players do not have to answer questions in order of difficulty and can attempt to answer one, two or three questions in the same 'echelon' on one turn, providing they have the right 'echelon' cards. If a player attempts three questions and gets the first or second one wrong, he still forfeits all three cards. If a player wishes, he can exchange three cards from his hand with three from the pack: this constitutes his turn.

Various decisions have to be made during the course of the game. Shall I try to answer as many questions as possible before ending the game? Shall I try more than one question at a time? Shall I go for a gold piece? Shall I play a Revision card – it's tempting, but it also means that the other players can benefit too? How many points have the others got?

detail and description. Among the authors represented are the Brontës, Conan Doyle, Dickens, Scott, Swift and Wilde. A number of extracts have been simplified for younger children, although they are still quite difficult. However hard one tries, it is distracting trying to read and remember during those first five minutes. It's like trying to swot in a crowded room. Also, as you ask questions and listen to the answers on someone else's extract, your own carefully remembered information soon becomes confused.

Echelon is a well constructed game with first class presentation and is great fun to play. As with most such games, the more players the merrier. We tested it with five players and the average game length was an hour and a half. The publishers promise additional sets of extract cards in the future, but those supplied with the game will keep most people going for a long time to come.

John Humphries

GREAT EXPECTATIONS
It may sound easy just remembering what you have read, but the extracts have been carefully selected and contain a wealth of

DEATH BY DIET

DESIGNED BY
R D ZIMMERMAN

PUBLISHED BY
LOMBARD MARKETING

PRICE £18.50

**

accompanying the jigsaw pieces. The idea is that you read the story, construct the jigsaw puzzle, examine the 'scene of the crime' (that is, the jigsaw) in order to spot one or two clues and then guess the identity of the murderer. It's a little more challenging that your usual Asterix the Gaul jigsaw. What makes it harder is that you have no idea what the puzzle should look like when completed, as to provide a photo of the completed puzzle would somewhat defeat the object of reconstructing the scene of the crime.

merman he has precious few pages to work with. I am also prejudiced against the 'Murder She Wrote' school of detective fiction, where amateur sleuths solve improbable crimes as an alternative hobby to completing crossword puzzles, and if you are a fan of the Agatha Christie school of mystery stories then you may find the yarn passable. I myself thought the two bantering detectives were hideously unsympathetic and the author's attempts at levity – 'There's a killing to be made in crime!' – backfired badly.

The jigsaw puzzle has been around for a long time, and you may have thought that there is very little new which can be done with the format. Lombard Marketing, however, have watched far too many third-rate American mystery movies where the detective claims to be 'searching for the one piece in the jigsaw that makes the whole thing complete', because they have brought out a series of jigsaws which combine elements of detective fiction with the traditional jigsaw.

Death by Diet is just one of the jigsaws in the BePUZZLED series. It has 500 interlocking pieces of good quality, and when completed should measure 20" by 20". If it doesn't, then you could have another mystery on your hands!

So, what makes this puzzle different? Well, for one thing you get a short story

BOMB ON BOMB

The story is written by 'well known suspense writer R D Zimmerman'. Now, I reckon I have read over five hundred detective novels and I have never heard of Mr Zimmerman. My esteemed editor has suggested that perhaps it's Bob Dylan moonlighting under his real name of Robert Zimmerman, but even old Bob's writing was never this bad! My own theory is that the author's name is a misprint, and the story has been written by Lieutenant Doberman, of *Bilko* fame.

Mr Zimmerman, Doberman, or whatever his real name is, has also written the stories for the others in the series, namely **Murder Most Artful, Bomb!** and **The Emerald Spy**. The aptly titled **Bomb!** best describes the quality of the **Death by Diet** story, although to be fair to Mr Zim-

Enough of the literary review. Suffice to say that the story serves its purpose of introducing four likely suspects, all of whom have something unusual about them. After completing the puzzle and re-reading the story (just grit your teeth and do it) you should have enough to go on to make a good guess at the murderer or murderers. The one truly incriminating clue was almost impossible to notice even after reading the solution, thanks to the unsuitability of the jigsaw format for fine detail. To give a hypothetical example unrelated to **Death by Diet**, imagine the difficulty of noticing a small crack in a window pane among all the wavy outlines of the jigsaw puzzle.

THE BIG SLEEP

The BePUZZLED concept promises more than it delivers. I was expecting the

story to provide clues that would help me complete the puzzle, rather than a puzzle that would help me make sense of the story. As such, I found this turned out to be 'just another jigsaw puzzle' and left it to the wife to complete, as she does all the work round the house in any case. The completed puzzle was uninspiring to look at and there was little chance of the missus framing it and putting it on the wall. Fortunately the puzzle comes in a bookcase-format box, so you can store it on a shelf, where it will provide five seconds of interest to browsers.

On the positive side I can say the components were of top quality, but then at

£18.50 I would expect nothing less. The questionnaire enclosed with the game suggests that Lombard Marketing are considering extending their ranks to include science fiction. I believe this genre would enable the company to devise more visually inspiring puzzles, and would also enable them to throw a few unusual challenges in the way of the accomplished jigsaw puzzler, such as figuring out where to put the eyeballs on an alien from the planet Argus.

John Harrington (Puzzle completed by Lin Harrington)

The game can be played by one to five people. One player (usually the owner of the game) takes the part of the Gamesmaster who lays out the dungeon as the others delve in and explore, controls the monsters that the players will have to face, sets traps and generally attempts to hinder the others as much as possible while ensuring that everything runs smoothly and according to the rules.

DARK LORD

The other players each control a hero and, as his or her fame spreads, perhaps a number of henchmen too. Heroes come in many forms: human, dwarven, elven, and some choose to defend themselves with arcane magics rather than the trusty sword and shield. The Gamesmaster will set the heroes tasks or quests to perform and this will involve them moving underground into a dungeon, wandering through labyrinthine passages and echoing chambers, fighting the inhabitants they find there and recovering lost treasures, rescuing fair maidens and all the other heroic actions one would expect from fantastic characters.

Although the Gamesmaster will often have whole areas of the dungeons prepared, the random generation tables are quite fun. Despite the great depth of these tables, though, I'd guess that constant reliance on them will produce very samey results. I'd advise moderation, but please don't ignore them. The starting quest in the rule book uses them quite

ADVANCED HEROQUEST

DESIGNED BY
JERVIS JOHNSON

PUBLISHED BY
GAMES WORKSHOP

PRICE £19.99

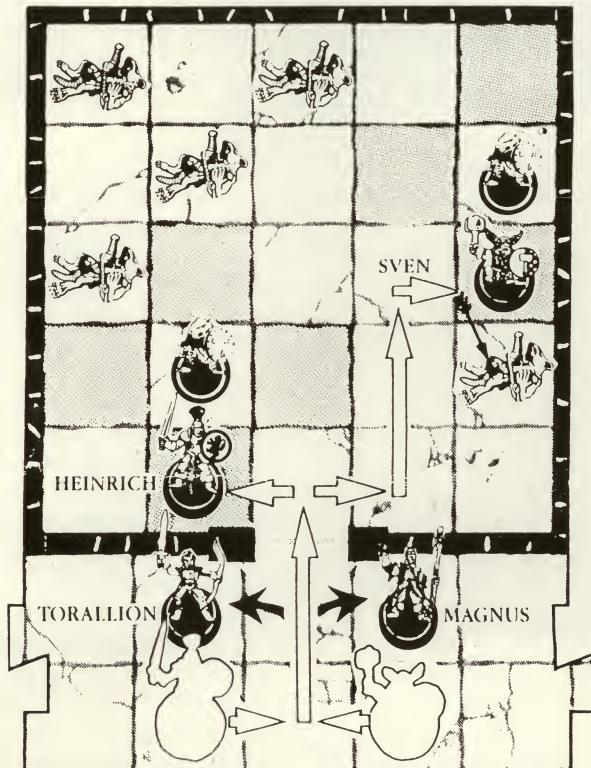
Following hot on the heels of the success of MB's *HeroQuest* (reviewed GI #8) comes *Advanced HeroQuest* from Games Workshop. I had been of the impression, as I'm sure most people had, that this was supposed to be a sequel or expansion to the 'original' game, but to me it looks for all the world like the same game produced by a different company.

The contents of the mega-box are as impressive as we've come to expect from Games Workshop – 42 beautiful 25mm plastic Citadel miniature figurines and doors, and almost eighty full colour counters and interlocking room and corridor sections. These are a true delight and all other producers (except the Germans, of course) could learn a lesson from GW's attention to quality components.

WARSLEMMER

The rule book is a 64 page monster covering every aspect of the game. Less than half of that is the rules *per se* with lots of coverage given to reference sheets, campaign development, incorporating MB's *HeroQuest*, rules for solo play and a giant four part quest to get you going right away.

Advanced HeroQuest is nominally set in GW's *Warhammer* fantasy world and boy, do they make a meal of that! The continual references, by word and image, to *Warhammer* this, *Warhammer* that, Citadel miniatures, Citadel paints, future supplements and *White Dwarf* magazine had me pulling out pieces of my beard. I don't know why I should react like this – cross-advertising is so common these days that it has become 'acceptable'. Perhaps I'm just old-fashioned but it leaves a horrible taste of hard sell and incompleteness in my mouth. I hasten to add that the game is not, by any means, incomplete – it just seems that when I'm continually told there's so much more I could have to make the game so much better, I begin to feel that I *must* be missing something . . .



heavily so you'll have their measure after that anyway.

Inevitably comparisons must be made with MB's version of the game. It felt as if it had been rushed out of production (for the Xmas market?) and could have been much better with more playtesting. **Advanced HeroQuest** has the opposite problem, appearing as it does to be overproduced and a tad too complex with ranged combat, critical hits and fumbles, fate points, sophisticated rules on magic and character generation and many, many

more frilly bits. The three star rating reflects this and my inability to make a solid decision on the product. I think it has a lot in common with Tottenham Hotspur. You can clearly see that it *should* be magnificent and indeed, at times it is. But just as often it's a great disappointment too, for no obvious reason whatsoever. I claim my right to reserve judgement on the beast for a future date – about the middle of May when the season's finished.

Philip A Murphy



TEMPLE OF THE BEASTMEN

DESIGNED BY
LESTER W SMITH

PUBLISHED BY
GDW

PRICE £19.95

**

This is a relatively simple but effective game in the Space 1889 series. They state, accurately enough, that it is an ad-

venture boardgame for 2–6 players, aged 12 to adult, with a playing time of one to one and a half hours. The idea – to play characters who explore levels of an underground complex which is randomly set up each game using area tiles – is nothing new. However, it does avoid many of the pitfalls of similar games and is basically quite good, but errors, omissions and rather poor quality components for its price, spoil it. Character sheets and chits had printing errors in that they did not correspond to the rule book. Cards were badly die-cut and many area tiles had torn or bent backing leading to premature identification. A patterned background would be better than plain white which shows every mark. In this type of game it is essential that all hidden elements remain unknown until revealed.

The big omission was that nowhere does it state how the game ends! One assumes it's when all the cards have been used up, but how it proceeds after that is unclear. Again we assume that characters have to exit the complex, but there are cryptic comments in the Strategy Hints about extra victory points for early exits, but nothing in the rules to cover it! Very frustrating.

With a choice of 10 different characters to play, plus the random set-up of area tiles, each game should be varied enough to keep the interest going despite the limited arrangement of tiles. Each character's unique abilities and goals, some of which overlap, do require different play,

causing good interplay even without the optional 'Combat between characters' rule. Number of players has little effect on the game length unless that option is applied. Solitaire play is covered and works well. Characters seem pretty well balanced although the individual goals far outweigh normal victory points. Luck will inevitably play a large part in this type of random mechanics game, but you have plenty of actions that require thought and deduction to feel you are in control of your own destiny. Losses are normally quite small, being nuisances rather than disasters, and nobody gets killed off.

I would like to see this game do well as it has a lot going for it, but I feel that in its present form people would be rather disappointed with it and lose interest. The makers would be advised to reissue it without all the errors and with better components.

Richard Ashley

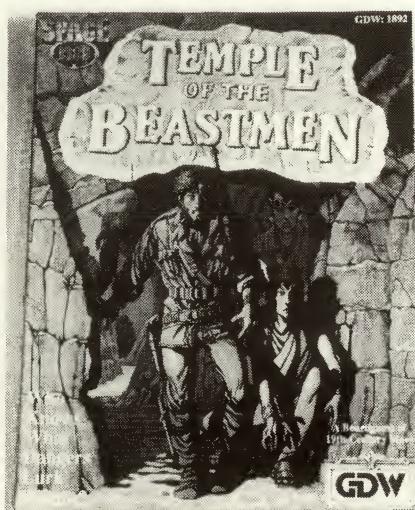
We spoke to GDW after reading our reviewer's comments. They acknowledged that a rule had been accidentally omitted, and promised to send us a correction. This they did a few days later, and we are pleased to be able to publish it here.

WINNING THE GAME

Once the last card has been drawn from the deck, characters begin to exit the kraag. (They need not take the most direct route, and they can pause to fight beastmen and pick up items remaining on the board.) Players whose pawns exit early may continue to play Hold Cards from their hands during their turns, as long as there is at least one pawn remaining on the board.

Each counter that a character brings out of the kraag is worth one victory point, unless it states that it is worth more. As well, each player whose pawn exits the kraag accrues one victory point per turn until the last pawn exits. (An easy way to keep track of this is to have each player whose pawn has exited draw one one-point counter, such as a slave, during each of his turns, until the last pawn exits.) To these victory points are added the points for a character's primary goal, if it was achieved.

After the last pawn exits the kraag, all players calculate their victory points, and the person with the highest total wins. Players with equal scores tie.



THEME PARK

The Game's Afoot!

A review of obscure and not so obscure games featuring Sherlock Holmes from 1904 to the present day, described by Mr Kevin W Jacklin.

After Robinson Crusoe and Hamlet, the most famous creation in English literature is surely Sherlock Holmes, the fictional detective character of Arthur Conan Doyle. Unlike his two illustrious companions, however, Holmes has been the springboard for innumerable plays, films, radio adaptations, comic books, pastiches (from short story to full-blown novel), send-ups, puzzles, crosswords, and . . . games. As far as I can discover, the very first game to feature Holmes appeared in 1904 – the same year that *The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist* was first published. The pedigree is, therefore, a long one.

It is possible to list over 1000 game-related items which can be traced back to Holmes. However, this would include crossword puzzles, chess sets and bridge problems. Also, some games issued use a

deerstalker clad detective as publicity material or artwork but turn out to have nothing to do with the great detective after all. Examples would be early editions of *Cluedo* (Waddingtons) and *Sleuth* (Avalon Hill). Let us confine ourselves to card games, boardgames and rolegames which try to emulate either the thinking required of a detective or bring out the essence of late Victorian England.

that it could be played competitively. Not all of the cases are very Sherlockian, but the solutions do depend upon player's observations and their ability to deduce facts. There are a number of similar games available still, and Lawrence Treat is the acknowledged master of picture-clue books.

FAMILY BOARDGAMES

Sherlock Holmes: The Game of the Great Detective was published by National Games in 1956, heralding a rash of family boardgames with a Holmesian theme. Most of these can be regarded as attempts to cash in on the success of *Cluedo* which was released originally by Parker Brothers in 1949. This game is typical of the type, and contains board, dice, coloured tokens, charts and cards. The object in this case is to gather all the correct clues describing an imaginary criminal, and their crime, then get to 221B Baker St first with the solution. Other examples of this genre are **Murder on the Orient Express: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery Game** (Ideal, 1967); **Sherlock Holmes** (Minimodels, 1969); and **The Sherlock Holmes Game** (Cadaco, 1974). Despite the rather shaky pedigree, there are two excellent 'family' boardgames featuring Holmes. **Adventures with Sherlock Holmes: A New Detective Game** by Steve Franklin (1976) is described as 'Designed by a Sherlock Holmes buff for adults but suitable for age 12 and up.' The contents speak of a great love of the original Holmes: 50 Sherlock Holmes playing cards, 12 cases of Holmes and Watson, four sets of 24 different Paget and Steele illustrations, a game board of London and its environs via the railways of the 1890s, case board with Steele illustrations, and so forth. If you can find this game it is well worth playing.

The last of the boardgames is **221B Baker Street** (1975; USA – Antler Productions/Hansen; UK – Gibsons Games). This game is widely available and is a popular Christmas seller. It contains a board depicting various 'London' locations, a number of pawns representing players' detectives, note pads, case cards and a clue book. A case is chosen and read



aloud to the players, whereupon a die is rolled for each detective in turn, which travels to a location on the board. At each location a clue number is given and is then read (in secret, usually) by the player. By going to a number of clue points a player may then deduce the solution to the current puzzle. The first player to announce a successful solution after returning to Baker St is the winner. To make it a little more difficult for other detectives to read clues at any one location it is possible to place a 'lock' card at a clue point – which may be overcome by a 'key' card. Supplies of each are limited so they ought to be used with care. The system generally works well, although sometimes the choice of location for certain clues appears to be random. Often a clue will be a simple anagram of the perpetrator; at other times it will be more abstruse.

The unique feature of this over most other family games is that the players are required to solve a mystery each time. Once a 'case' has been used it cannot be replayed by the same player. However there are some 100 cases in the UK available (200 in the USA). The quality of the cases is variable (hence Gibsons' decision to release only the 'best' – they were even asking for contributions at the last Earls Court Toy Fair!). Despite occasional errors and misprinted clues the atmosphere is good and several cases may be played in an evening.

Just released is a **221B Baker Street** Video Game which contains a video cassette with 10 Holmesian mysteries. The introduction is played and then the players use the game mechanics of the boardgame to try to solve the case. When everyone has written the solution down Holmes will reveal all. Obviously **221B** is doing well and we can expect to see further expansions.

FANGS FOR THE MEMORY

Undead (Steve Jackson Games, 1981) is a game for 2–3 players, although three is best. One person is the moderator, the next Dracula (Prince of Darkness), and the last Professor Van Helsing plus 'assistants' – Holmes and Watson are but two. The hunters must prevent Dracula from creating more vampires and thereby spreading panic across the metropolis (a rather tacky very early Victorian map is provided). They accomplish this by noting reports of nightly 'incidents' (Dracula is busy moving coffins around town and gaining more 'converts') in the morning press and investigating them. They are searching for coffins containing Transylvanian earth, destroying as many

as they can find. Hopefully they can confront the Count during daylight hours (when he is weakest) and finish him off!

In a three player game the protagonists may not meet face to face until the final denouement. The moderator has the fun of watching the frantic efforts of the investigators chasing each lead, as well as the evil machinations of the Count as he attempts to seduce more (un?)willing victims into his clutches. The **Undead** game comes in the traditional SJG 'black box' format; it contains the above mentioned map, plus larger scale plans of boudoirs and crypts (the scene of hand-to-hand combat). Cut-out counters represent the various characters (Holmes, Watson, Renfield and so on). The atmosphere is good, and the play reasonably paced and exciting. A game may be played in two hours.

Jack the Ripper (by Tom Loback, Mike Willner, Rick Bowes; Aulic Council/Sleuth, 1983) is a two player board-game which recreates the horrific events of 1888 in the murky East End of London. One player chooses one of ten (historically accurate) suspects to be the Ripper, and thereupon attempts to commit murders each turn; while the Police player (assuming the role of the infamous Sir Charles Warren) tries to eliminate names from the suspect list.

A map board is provided, together with 100 or so counters (one of which is a consulting detective . . .), plus suspect and advantage cards. After a murder the Police Disgrace Index rises, and the Ripper can assume a variety of guises, as well as lose himself amid the swirl of a 'peasouper' in an attempt to cover his tracks. The Police may double patrols of constables, throw suspects in gaol for a turn, or even enlist the help of Holmes . . .

The game ends when the Index reaches 10 points (riots in Whitechapel, questions in the House), at which point Warren must name the Ripper or resign in disgrace. This game, especially because of the subject matter, is suitable for adults who are fans of the Victorian period. Holmes makes only a peripheral appearance – but the game is evocative of Victorian background. Overall the game mechanics are simple; the main problem is that suspect counters may become worn and identifiable by the police player (I have covered my set with magnetic counter holders).

TOP CONSULTANT

The best of all the Sherlock Holmes games is Sleuth Publications' **Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective** (by Gary



Grady and Suzanne Goldberg, 1981). It is a cross between **221B**, a choose-your-own adventure book, a role-playing game and a novel; yet it is none of these. The basic game comes with a large map of London, a London directory, a case book (10 cases), a clue book (listing all clue points and applicable clues for each case), a newspaper archive and a quiz book (one for each case).

Before beginning, players are introduced by Holmes to a cast of characters who may help in their investigations: from Shinwell Johnson, owner of the Rat & Raven (an informant) to society columnist Quintin Hogg of the Police Gazette. These are clue points which can be used in any case (one would visit Sir Jasper Meeks, pathologist, at St Bart's as a matter of course in any murder investigation, for instance).

The players take the 'role' of members of Holmes's private force of Baker Street Irregulars – Holmes is training them up to be fully fledged consulting detectives. A case is chosen and the introduction is read aloud to the players. After that it is up to the detectives. General clues may be found by reading that (and previous day's edition of the Times, and by examining the London map. A clue point is then determined (from the map or London directory) and looked up in the clue book. By proceeding through the clue points an answer may gradually be deduced.

When everyone is satisfied that they have a solution, the quiz book is opened and points are scored for correct answers. Finally the case book is consulted once more for Holmes's preferred solution.

Although it is possible to play the game competitively (and extremely well solo), it is best enjoyed when players discuss amongst themselves the merits of visiting various clue points one at a time. The enjoyment comes from seeing if one can unscramble a case, not merely from scoring points. Indeed many points to be scored discriminate in favour of those intimate with the original Conan Doyle stories. The adventures are well written, suffer-

ing only a little from their American origins (no barkeeps and sidewalks in London!). The mystery elements are also well thought out and are replayable after a year or two (when one has had time to forget). In addition the stories are easily adaptable into role-playing adventures.

A number of supplements have gradually been released for **Consulting Detective**. The new editions of these are self contained and do not need the original game in order to be played. The first is **The Mansion Murders** which contains five more adventures, centred on Carleton House in Eaton Place. Two large floor plans map out the house, which are used in conjunction with the London map to provide clue points. Another volume in the newspaper archive is also provided.

The Queen's Park Affair moves away from the 'single case' format by providing an extended investigation over four days in September 1888. A map of the Queen's Park area is provided, along with case notes and the newspaper archive. Two new features are introduced in this supplement: firstly the amount of time spent at each clue point is given and used in conjunction with a Time Pad to make the investigation better paced. Secondly a sheaf of 'real' clues is stuffed into an envelope for the Irregulars to make of what they will. These include letters, newspaper cuttings, business cards, ticket stubs and receipts. I would not recommend **The Queen's Park Affair** to the novice (I replay it from time to time and still make the same mistakes!). The original release of this expansion did not con-

tain a solution because it was a prize competition.

IT'S A GAS

The latest release for **Consulting Detective** is **Adventures by Gaslight** which was first published under licence in France and subsequently in an English edition in July 1988. This is a single adventure running over several days, beginning in London and (not surprisingly) continuing on to Paris. A Parisian map is provided along with the newspapers (including *Le Figaro*). The quality of the components and the adventure is well up to the general standard and is a good addition to the series.

For completists there is one more adventure available. *Different Worlds* magazine issue 44 (Nov/Dec 1986) contains an case called 'Sherlock Holmes and the Baby' written by Dave & Frankie Arneson. Unfortunately the adventure is weak by comparison with others – and suffers from space limitations. Sleuth Publications seems to be in financial trouble and has turned into Shamus Publications; hopefully we will see soon the long-awaited **East End Adventures** and **Murder on the Liverpool Express**. Meanwhile the occasional magazine *Sleuth Times* provides a welter of Victorian background material for fans of the game (and role-players) as well as Sherlockiana in general.

There is a choose-your-own adventure series of Holmes gamebooks released under the innovative banner **Sherlock**

Holmes Solo Mysteries (by Gerald Leintz and others; Iron Crown Enterprises, 1987 and on). Once again the character is assumed to be one of the Irregulars under Holmes's tutelage; Holmes will introduce the case, leave the player to solve it and turn up again at the end to fill in any of the missing gaps. Character generation is similar to most gamebooks, although characteristics stress abilities useful in detection (such as observation and scholarship rather than dagger wielding). Herein lies the strength of this series when compared to most dungeon bashing adventures – there is a fair amount of real thinking required and clues must be collected in order to reach

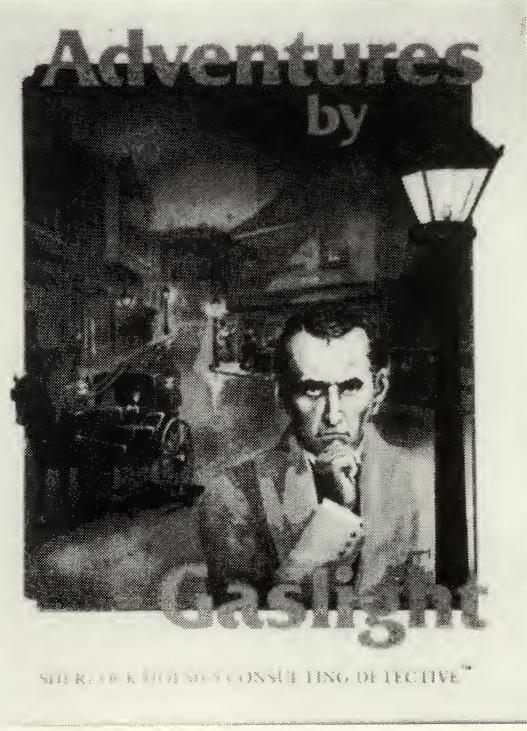
a successful conclusion. There is a small amount of 'legwork' but this is subsidiary to the main plot.

The background is reasonably evocative of the period and on the whole glaring Americanisms are kept to a minimum. If you have younger relatives who want to try out gamebooks and you don't want the embarrassment of seeing an MP denouncing the book as a work of the devil on local TV, then the **Sherlock Holmes Solo Mysteries** will fill the gap nicely.

PROTO ROLEGAME

Role-players are reasonably well catered for as regards Victorian material. There have been two or three role-playing games specifically based around Holmes, plus a variety of supplements for other existing games. **Elementary Watson** (by Ed Konstant, Phoenix Games; 1978) is a proto-rolegame. It contains a rule book, a map of London and a single sheet of detective characteristics. Two sample crimes are included. The referee prepares for the game by writing a crime scenario; players then choose six areas of expertise (from Accounting through to Zoology). In each game turn players may move to another area of the map or ask one question (in writing to the referee!) relating to the area they are already in – the referee replies in kind. There are five moves per 'day' and the game stops at the end of a (secretly) preallocated time. There is little or no player interaction. At any time a player may announce that he has solved the crime but if he is wrong he has to sit out the rest of the game. A player 'wins' if he has successfully spotted at least half the clues.

As a rolegame **Elementary Watson** leaves a great deal to be desired – there is no character generation as such and the so-called 'Victorian' background is nonexistent. However, let me at this point raise the great bugbear of all 'detective' elements in any role-playing game: the ability of the player to work something out versus his character's ability. There is always the temptation on the part of the player to use his own knowledge to push his character along a certain path; and the referee himself is in a dilemma as to how much of a hint to give a character who has spent a lifetime studying in an area which is now relevant. The more detailed the rules system employed, the greater this dilemma. By ignoring it altogether **Elementary Watson** is simply crimesolving within the bare framework of a rules system, and should therefore be enjoyed at that level. It does not, however, provide a particularly convincing Victorian background or enough adventures – the referee



ree is left with a great deal to do. Incidentally, the best set of guidelines for role-playing mystery creation that I have found were written by Michael Stackpole in **Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes**, which uses the **Tunnels & Trolls** system.

SPIRITUALISM

Virtually all the games mentioned so far are American in origin (a testament to Holmes's popularity across the pond). How nice it would be to report that **Victorian Adventure** (by Stephen K Smith, 1983) was worth waiting for. Unfortunately I cannot because it does little to further the 'art of detection' in the Victorian (or indeed any other) era. **Victorian Adventure** is a 48 page rule book which contains character generation and the usual combat rules, some Victorian background and history, a chapter on Spiritualism, prominent events, prices, costume, and some inventions of the period. There are also three scenarios of varying quality. The real problems with the game are the virtually incomprehensible character generation rules and game mechanics; if you can get past this then the background material is reasonable (although there is nothing there which is not available elsewhere). That said, at least Mr Smith emphasises the role-playing aspects. (There is a second edition of the game which, I believe, omits the spiritualism and adds a rather good map of London as a referee's screen. If the rules have also been cleaned up then it is probably playable).

There is a better selection of generic role-game background material on the Victorian era. 'A Gamer's Guide to Victorian London' by William A Barton was originally published in *Fantasy Gamer* #2 (Steve Jackson Games, 1983), and has since been republished as a supplement to **Victorian Adventure** (Winterhawk Games). Sixteen closely typed pages contain most of what is needed to run a Victorian campaign: an essay on the Victorian era, coinage and prices, clothing styles, transportation and communications, the law and the underworld, a timeline from 1880 to 1901 (real and imaginary events), the Thames, personalities (real and fictitious) together with generic character statistics (including Holmes, Watson and Professor James Moriarty), a reasonable map (with a key), scenario ideas and background reading.

This is an excellent introduction to the Victorian era and the quality reflects the care that has gone into the selection of material. Out of print copies of *Fantasy Gamer* circulate freely (and cheaply) and

so I recommend this for most role-players.

YORKSHIRE HORRORS

William Barton returns to the Victorian era once more in **Cthulhu by Gaslight** (Chaosium, 1986). Indeed much of the work that went into the *Fantasy Gamer* article resurfaces here, albeit with a Cthulhoid bent. The major themes of the above work are repeated here, although on a grander scale. For instance, there are some excellent plans of Westminster Abbey and The Tower; and an even greater cast of characters listed. There is also a very fine (simplified) map of central London.

About half the volume is devoted to a single scenario entitled 'The Yorkshire Horrors' in which Holmes and Watson play a key part. Herein lies the problem of when Holmes turns up in a case. It is rather like that of Superman: a method has to be found of robbing him of his awesome powers or else the conclusion is more or less foregone. I prefer to keep Holmes well into the background in my campaigns and he is usually 'out' when desperate detectives come to call. Mr Barton takes more or less the same line here: Holmes may be available if things turn nasty.

My gripe with the **Gaslight** scenario is that it is a long one and players new to *Call of Cthulhu* or the Victorian era may find it a little daunting. Also, the scenario doesn't take advantage of using the places described in the sourcebook section, by locating the action in Yorkshire.

I can recommend **Gaslight** highly, because it is the best produced and clearest background package for Victorian London yet. The second edition was released in large softback book form in 1988; it clears up most of the errors of the first edition and has extra background material. Only buy the first (boxed) edition if you want a handy character sheet and an enormous London map.

Both **Gaslight** and the 'Gamer's Guide' list in their recommended reading material **Baedeker's Guide to London** (1894). Having scoured many a bookshop for this I can testify as to the difficulty of finding contemporary source material. However, in **London by Night - Adventure in a Victorian City** (by David Nalle, Ragnarok Enterprises 1984) one of the major game components is a large reprint from that very volume. Other contents include a background/character/scenario book and the inevitable map (not a very good one this time). Topics covered include



Social London in the 1890s, careers and occupations, the cost of living, movements and factions, the State and the Government, Law and Order, and the supernatural. There is a key for the map also, as well as statistics for Holmes, Watson, and other prominent characters.

London by Night is a supplement to Ragnarok's **To Challenge Tomorrow** role-playing game (they are most famous for their **Ysgarth** system). TCT has its proponents, but I would recommend this pack purely on the strength of the source material. The quality of production is nowhere near as good as Chaosium's, though, so be prepared for eyestrain! Having said that it is quite cheap, and there are four scenarios each emphasising different potential aspects (political, detective, horror/supernatural). These serve as excellent examples of detective scenario construction. And the Baedecker section is a gem.

CONTEMPORARY

Let me recommend some more elusive contemporary sources at this point. The very best source is the 1910 edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. I saw the abridged version at Foyles a year ago at £140 – extremely good value. Also look out for almanacs such as Whitaker's (I prefer Hazell's); these contain some good maps and summaries of recent events (they have a greater immediacy than Baedecker's). The best map I have of Victorian London I found in a junk shop for 50p – so keep on looking! Available at the moment is *Bacon's A-Z of Victorian London* (Harry Margary, 1987) which is a superb collection of contemporary maps in the traditional A-Z style. The index also lists not only street names but districts, parishes, public buildings, offices, institutions (banks, clubs, schools & colleges, foreign embassies & consulates, hospitals, hotels, prisons and (yes) workhouses). Invaluable!

Doubtless I have missed some of Holmes's appearances in the odd game or two (ones that got away include **Mad Dogs and Englishmen** and **Master Sleuth**). I have omitted PBMs and computer games

completely. However, I hope to have given a reasonable flavour of what is available. For those of you who really have to know, there are two enormous concordances by R B de Waal — *The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes* and *The International Sherlock Holmes* which attempts to list *everything* ever written about Holmes. This includes chess and crossword games, as well as

puzzles and a whole lot more Holmes-related material from translations into Czech to comic pastiches on LP from San Francisco. The author acknowledges these sources for the basic descriptions of some of the games reviewed above.

The 'cult of Holmes' shows no sign whatever of losing momentum, and so games featuring Holmes (together with Watson,

Moriarty and a bungling Scotland Yard) as a source of inspiration will no doubt continue to be published for the next one hundred years. G

An abridged version of this article first appeared in the Small Furry Creatures Press.

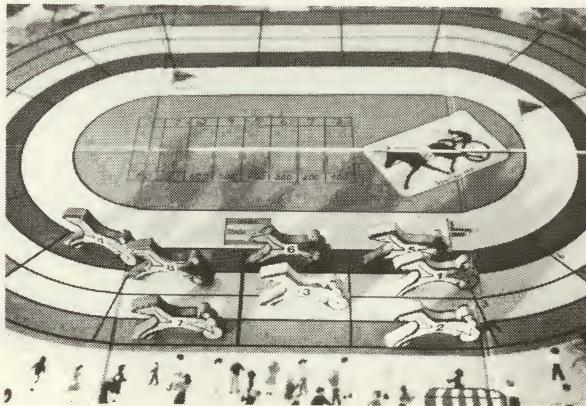
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COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Old bones, new bodies

Bruce Whitehill, the Big Game Hunter, continues his survey of the origins of the American board game.

Hangman, a popular early pencil and paper game, was put out in boxed form by Milton Bradley in 1976. Not long ago it was dropped from the line, and then was reintroduced in 1989. The game is still the same, though Vincent Price does not appear on the box cover as he did in the earlier version. In the 1950s, Northwestern Products produced a three-dimensional version of Hangman called **Suspense**, which consisted of plastic body parts that hooked together, suspended from a plastic gallows.

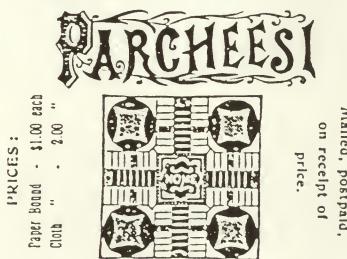
Hi-Q is an early solitaire puzzle that was first produced under than name by Kohner in 1944. The game, also known as Solitaire, is the more popular 33-hole variant of an early game played on the 37-hole Fox and Geese board. According to R C Bell in his 1979 *The Boardgame Book*, Solitaire dates back to the French Revolution (the late 1700s), if not earlier. John Beasley, in his 1985 book *The Ins and Outs of Peg Solitaire*, refers to an engraving of the game from 1697 and a written description of it in 1710; Beasley believes that the simplicity of the game suggests it was played much earlier than known records indicate. One of the earliest known American games of this type is a hand-made wood set called **Gem Solitaire** and dated 1881 (no maker identified). Like the plastic **Hi-Q**, it uses pegs to replace the traditional marbles.

One of the earliest popular versions of the solitaire puzzle was called **Puzzle Peg** and was manufactured by Lubbers & Bell of Clinton, Iowa, in 1922. A 1935 version pictured in a book by Jerry Slocum and

Jack Botermans, *Puzzles Old and New*, is called **The Crystal Solitaire** by S A Derwick of Yonkers, New York. The puzzle used clear marbles with the traditional board of 37 holes. Many other companies, including Knapp Electric and Empire Plastics, manufactured Solitaire under various different titles. Milton Bradley now produces a 'travel version' of this early classic puzzle; the MB set uses the 33-hole 'English' board.

The **Game of India**, known also as Pachisi, has been one of the most widely played games in the world, and is the forerunner of Selchow & Righter's **Parcheesi** and of the English game **Ludo**, which dates to 1896. Owing its ancestry to the Korean game of Nyout from the third century, the Game of India (or, simply, India) is the namesake of the country in which it has enjoyed immense popularity for generations. McLoughlin Brothers had an early **Game of India**, which may pre-date the 1901 **Game of India** published by Milton Bradley. MB's current game is in a standard 15" by 8 1/2" box, whereas the earlier version came with a separate board and parts box, the box measuring only 3 5/8 inches wide by 2 1/2 inches high!

The Best Home Game Adapted for either Children or Adults



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Liars (or Liar) Dice is a variant of Poker Dice which, according to R C Bell, may have originated long ago in Mexico. The Milton Bradley version, a new addition to the line in 1988, supplements the traditional five-dice amusement with an added game board and special dice.

Mousetrap was originally produced by Ideal in 1963. When MB picked up some of CBS Ideal's line in 1986, this classic and crazy chain reaction game was included.

The game of **Othello** is an unusual success story. The game, allegedly named for Shakespeare's play because of the game's black and white pieces, supposedly came to the US from Japan. It was introduced by Gabriel in 1976, and won awards for the 'best new game'. But, with the possible exception of one minor rule change, **Othello** is exactly the same as **Reversi**, a game very popular during the 1950s. The earliest McLoughlin Brothers' **Reversi** game carries the date 1888, but according to a turn-of-the-century English book, Saxon's *Everybody's Book of Indoor Games*, **Reversi**'s origin dates back to 1870. The game was introduced in England by John W Mollett Esq BA. It was in the shape of a cross, and was published under the name of **The Game of Annexation**. The board was changed to an ordinary checker/draughts board, and the name changed to **Annex, A Game of Reverses**. Milton Bradley now produces this classic game – a superb strategy game that is touted as taking 'A minute to learn . . . A lifetime to master.'

Yahtzee was invented by Samuel Lowe in 1956 as the game of **Yacht**. Lowe was the businessman who made his name (and fortune) with Bingo games in the 1920s. In 1973, the E S Lowe company, including the now-classic game of **Yacht**, was bought by Milton Bradley. **Yahtzee** is possibly the number one dice game in the US, and remains a part of the MB line today.

Better Games for Children



UNCLE WIGGILY GAME

EVERY child in the land knows Howard R. Garis' Happy Rabbit, "Uncle Wiggily." And in his game, adapted from his stories, the little folks will feel they are actually taking part in these adventures of Bunnyleand. It is one of the most healthfully exciting games for children made. And like all of the Bradley Better Games for Children teaches worth-while lessons.

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Bradley games are obtainable at Department, Toy Novelty and Stationery stores everywhere. Should you break the names of the games, just ask for "The World's Best Games" and you will be shown Bradley's.

MILTON BRADLEY CO., Springfield, Mass.
"Makers of the World's Best Games"
Not how much but how good for the money

Bradley's
THE WORLD'S BEST GAMES

Milton Bradley still manufactures many of the classic games which originated at MB over the past 50+ years — famous children's games such as **Go To The Head Of The Class**, introduced in 1938, **Game of the States**, which had its premiere in 1940, and **Candy Land**, which originated in 1949. The MB '89 line also includes the now-familiar games of **Racko**, originally sold in 1956, **Stratego**, the popular war strategy game from 1961, and **Operation**, a dexterity game which has captivated children since 1965.

Password, the game based on the popular television quiz show, debuted in 1962 and has been in the line ever since. Now, 28 years later, the MB catalogue is advertising the '25th Anniversary Edition' — called that because the company has been marketing that same edition for the past three years!

Simon, the most recent 'classic' game in MB's line, may have had its origin in California as a full-sized arcade video game. It became one of the most successful electronic games after its introduction in 1978, and is still one of the most copied games on the market.

Twister, an MB game from 1966, owes its fame primarily to Johnny Carson and Ava Gabor. The game, requiring body-bending feats, was demonstrated by the well-endowed Gabor on the *Tonight* show, and the public couldn't get enough.

Another MB item of note is **Uncle Wiggily**. The 1989 catalogue lists the game as 'new', yet **Uncle Wiggily** was introduced by Milton Bradley in 1916 (the first cata-

logue listing wasn't until 1921, however), and stayed in the line until 1966. In 1967 Parker Brothers obtained the rights to the game and published it for a number of years. And in 1989, both Milton Bradley and Parker Brothers reintroduced different versions of the same game.

Uncle Wiggily is based on the *Uncle Wiggily* Bedtime Stories of Howard R Garis. Parker claims: 'exclusive licensee under the rights of the late Howard R Garis', whereas MB's copyright reads: '1988 M R Garis'. MB obtained the rights from Howard Garis's daughter-in-law Mabel, and the question is, who

has the right rights — the late author or the living in- law?

The Parker game more closely resembles the original **Uncle Wiggily**, the object being to: 'Lead the rabbit gentleman through the forest to Dr Possum's office', number 151, which was the last space on the board as well as Dr Possum's address.

The MB version, noticeably different and abbreviated, reads: 'Join the rabbit gentleman on an exciting adventure'. The MB box doesn't even mention Dr Possum, and the current abridged MB game board only has 100 spaces. Incidentally, Uncle Wiggily hasn't been referred to as a 'rabbit gentleman' since the Milton Bradley catalogue of 1926.

Not only has the MB game changed, but so has the audience — the 1952 deluxe edition (with four enamelled metal rabbit playing pieces) was listed as 'for little folks 4 to 10 years of age'. In 1954 it was changed to 4 to 8 years of age, and in 1962 the age range went from 5 to 9. The newest MB version is now for ages 4 to 7, whereas the Parker game is listed as ages 5 to 11.

Also of historical interest in the MB line is the game of **Life**, which was released in 1960 on the one-hundredth anniversary of Milton Bradley's first game, **The Chequered Game of Life**. MB made a historical connection between the two games presumably for marketing purposes only, since the current game bears no resemblance to the original either in terms of design or mode of play.

Now that Hasbro, Milton Bradley's parent company, has purchased Coleco as well, MB becomes responsible for two Selchow & Righter games that were in Coleco's line: **Parcheesi** and **Scrabble** — two of the most famous games in history.

The rights to **Parcheesi**, the Game of India were bought by E G Selchow from Albert Swift in 1867. The game was trademarked in 1874, one of the earliest trademarks for an American game. **Parcheesi** versions and variations have been popular for a century, and have been produced by almost every major company under such titles as **Pachisi**, **India**, **Home**, **Pollyanna**, **Ludo** and **Sorry**.

The **Scrabble** Crossword game was developed by Alfred Butts between 1931 and 1935, and marketed in 1948 when Butts went into partnership with James Brunot to form the Production & Marketing Company. By 1950, the demand for the game was so great that Selchow & Righter began supplying the game boards for the company. S&R took over the manufacture and sale of **Scrabble** in 1953, after obtaining the licensing rights. They eventually bought full rights to the game. **Scrabble** could be the only trademarked game in which the implements have remained exactly the same in style and construction for over forty years.

Incidentally, J Pressman & Co put out a game in 1939 called **Wordy** which was almost identical to **Scrabble**, except that the letter tiles were colour-coded, each colour corresponding to a particular point value. Lynn Pressman, who ran the company after her husband Jack died, said that **Wordy** was taken from the pre-production game of **Scrabble**.

The **Parcheesi** and **Scrabble** games presently on store shelves in the US still bear the Selchow & Righter name. Once they're gone, the new MB games supposedly will carry only the Milton Bradley name, and the Selchow & Righter name and logo will become another piece of history.

More games history next issue.

About the author

Bruce Whitehill is one of the world's foremost authorities on American games. Known also as 'The Big Game Hunter', he has the largest diversified collection of antique American games in the world — over 350 US game companies represented from 1840 to 1960. He is currently working on a book on the the history of American games.

STRATEGY SEMINAR

Steve Jones dons his toga and provides a comprehensive guide to the great game of aspiring cultures.

CIVILIZING INFLUENCES

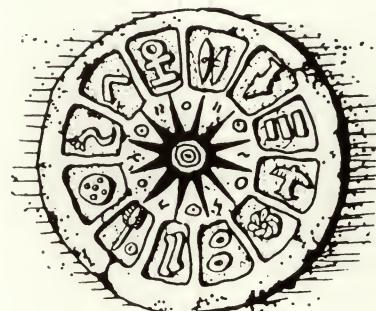
In purely abstract game terms, *Civilization* is a steeplechase race game; I shall elaborate upon this theme as the article develops. Looked at in this light, the game may seem quite ordinary. What elevates it to a classic is a combination of two things: the subject matter (or the 'chrome' aspect of the game), and the wonderfully balanced and rich structure of the rules. The latter moulds the game into one with elevated player interaction in ways which are complex, subtle and shifting, and yet are always under the players' collective control. In my opinion, *Civilization* is quite simply the best multi-player board game ever invented.

The subject matter of the game is an attractive and evocative one. It concerns the growth and development of the ancient civilisations around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and in the Middle East.

Each player starts off in control of a nomadic Stone Age tribe which then proceeds to develop a highly advanced classical civilisation over the course of millennia. The object of the game could not be simpler: it is to gain a state of overall advancement, involving cultural, economic and political factors, faster than anyone else. Although this makes the game into a race, it is vitally important to realise that it is one conducted on several different levels.

It is also important to realise that it is a game which megalomaniacs always lose. War is available as an instrument of policy, but the game is so structured as to make it into a blunt and relatively inefficient one. The more efficient means available to combat your opponents are,

to a greater or lesser extent, subtle, hidden, indirect, sophisticated, and 'civilised'.



THE KNOWN WORLD

The game consists of a map board, an Archaeological Succession Table (AST), eleven sets of trade cards, sixteen sets of civilization cards and seven sets (nine in the Avalon Hill version) of faction counters. The map board consists of three leaves (West, Central and East) depicting a region stretching from Sardinia in the west to the head of the Persian Gulf in the east, and from the upper Nile Valley in the south to the southern Ukraine in the north. Hartland have recently released an expansion kit containing a fourth leaf (WXB) which extends the map westwards to take in Iberia.

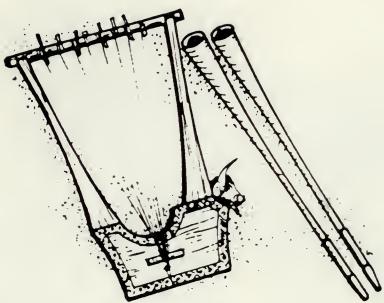
The map is divided into land and sea zones in much the same way as *Diplomacy* and *Risk*. The sea zones are subdivided into two types: coastal and open. The land zones each have a population carrying capacity indicated by a number. Some of the land zones also contain natural city sites. The map features, in addition, four flood plains and three volcanoes; there is a fifth flood plain on the WXB extension leaf.



The faction counters each consist of ~~any~~ six tokens, nine cities and four ships. One token is used as a marker on the AST, and the remainder may be used to represent either population on the board or money in the player's treasury. Depending upon the number of players in the game, the players are limited to a specific number of tokens each. This last is a deliberate design feature in the game. The main problem that the players continually face is one of limited resources. The subdivision of the each player's finite number of tokens among population on the board, money in his/her treasury, and his/her stock (tokens currently not in play) is a brilliant design mechanism for creating this shortage.

During the course of the game, there is a constant flow of tokens between a player's stock on one hand, and the board and his/her treasury on the other. Furthermore, this flow is more or less under the player's control. Nevertheless, players will find themselves facing problems, and occasionally windfalls, depending upon where their tokens are currently located. There are many subtle aspects to the management of the token flow, and players should acquaint themselves with these.





COMMODITIES

There are seventy four trade cards in the game. Of these, sixty six represent eleven commodities which have values from one to nine. The remaining eight cards represent calamities (more commonly known as disasters), and these all have value zero. The commodity cards are initially stacked, face downwards, in nine decks, each deck corresponding to the value of the commodities in it, and the calamity card of the appropriate type is placed at the bottom of each deck except the first.

The eleven commodities are Ochre, Hides, Papyrus, Iron, Salt, Grain, Cloth, Bronze, Spice, Gems and Gold; the first two have value one, the second two have value two, and the remaining seven have the values ranging from three to nine in order. When more than one card of a given commodity is held the net value of the collection is greatly increased. The formula for finding the total value of several cards of the same commodity is to multiply the square of the number of cards held by the commodity value; for example, five grain are worth $(5 \times 5) \times 4 = 100$.

During the course of the game, each player takes the top card from each trade deck for each city he/she has, and uses these to construct packages for trade with the other players. Through trade, the aim is to increase the net value of the commodities held in hand, and to use these to purchase civilization cards. The trade system is one of barter involving trade cards alone. Any number of trade deals may be made between the players, two at a time. In each trade deal, each player must offer at least three trade cards, correctly quote the total value of the package and correctly give the commodity of one of them; outside of these restrictions, anything can be said about the package. This last is important because trading does carry risks: some of the disaster cards can be passed on in a trade deal.

DISASTERS

The eight disasters are Volcano/Earthquake, Famine, Civil War, Flood, Epidemic, Civil Disorder, Iconoclasm &

Heresy, and Piracy. The first four are so-called red-backed disasters and affect the players who pick them up. The last four, on the other hand, are so-called black-backed disasters and can be passed on to another player through a trade deal; the disaster then effects that player!

As the names suggest, it does not help your aspiring civilisation to be affected by one of these disasters. Players will find it essential to acquaint themselves with the effects of the disasters, how to lessen their effect, how to direct them at their opponents, and how to reduce the chances of receiving one. In practice, it is impossible to avoid disasters completely. This is because an individual disaster does not affect only the player who received the card; that player may also, depending upon the exact nature of the disaster, 'distribute' its effects among the other players! This is just another one of the wonderful balancing mechanisms in the game.

If trade cards constitute the major currency in **Civilization**, civilization cards must be considered to be the *raison d'être* of the game, and the focus of all actions. There are seventy two civilization cards representing sixteen different aspects of civilisation. They are divided into four colour groups representing broad areas of human knowledge/endeavour. Most cards are members of only one group, but some are members of two. The groups are Arts (blue), Crafts (orange), Sciences (green) and Civics (red). The sixteen card types are Mysticism, Cloth Making, Pottery, Drama & Poetry, Music, Architecture, Astronomy, Metalworking, Agriculture, Coinage, Literacy, Engineering, Medicine, Law, Democracy, and Philosophy. They each have a value of between 30 and 240; the purchase price is equal to the card value but, in practice, it may be decreased by cards already held.

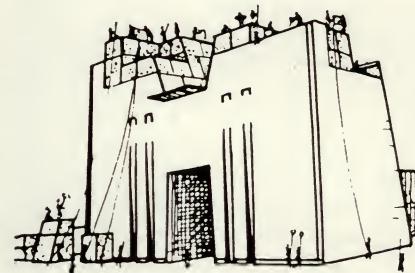


Each type also has an effect on play, usually by modifying some aspect of the normal rules. They are obtainable by exchanging trade cards and treasury of at least the same value. They can be relatively costly, and there may be a shortage of the various types depending upon the number of players in the game. If the lat-

ter is the case, you will find yourself competing with your opponents for a very limited resource, particularly so in the case of the more expensive cards. This has a considerable effect upon long term strategy, of which more anon.

RACE TRACK

The AST is the race track of the steeple-chase alluded to earlier on. It is essentially a non-linear timeline consisting of fifteen time steps, plus start and finish positions, and covering the period from 8000 BC to 250 BC. The non-linear nature of the timeline is evident from the fact that the first time step covers a period of three thousand years while the last step covers less than one hundred years. The timeline is further subdivided into nine independent tracks, each associated with a starting area on the map board and named after the various ancient civilisations and/or regions. These are, in the order 'down' the table: Africa, Italy, Illyria, Thrace, Crete, Asia, Assyria, Babylon and Egypt.



The WXB map leaf adds an extra track for Iberia and a modified African track which is only used if the WXB leaf is in play; in addition, Italy is not used when the WXB leaf is in play. Each track is divided into five numbered epochs identified as New Stone Age, Early Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, and Late Iron Age. Furthermore, the epochs are not of the same length on the different tracks; this can have an enormous effect on the choice of strategy of the different countries.

At the end of every turn, the AST tokens are usually moved forward one step; therefore the game is at least 16 turns long. However, entry to a new epoch requires the fulfilment of a minimum condition which depends upon the new epoch. The second epoch requires two cities, the third requires civilization cards representing three groups, the fourth requires seven civilization cards, and the fifth requires civilization cards totalling at least 1000 points. Once in the fifth epoch, the player needs a stated value on the AST to move forward; this time the value of treasury and trade cards may be

included in the total. In addition, in any epoch except the first, the token is moved backwards if a player has no cities! It should now be clear why the game can be likened to a steeplechase. Nearly every decision which a player makes during the course of a game should be geared towards keeping that token moving on the AST. One of the things which makes the game into a classic is the fact that some of your actions can also be directed to affect the movement of your opponents' tokens along the AST.



ORDER OF PLAY

Each game turn is subdivided into thirteen separate phases. These are Taxation and Revolts, Population Expansion, Census, Ship Construction, Movement, Conflict, City Building, Trade Card Acquisition, Trade, Civilization Card Acquisition, Calamity Resolution, Excess Trade Card Surrender, and AST Movement. In many of these phases, the order of play will often change from turn to turn, and it is vital to become thoroughly familiar with all the ramifications of this. This variable order of play is a self-balancing mechanism that has been deliberately built into the game's structure. It is well worth briefly discussing the eight cases in each game turn where an order of play is important.

Taxation

In the Taxation phase, any players who have insufficient tokens in their stocks to pay the taxation on their cities will lose to a revolt those cities which cannot pay. The cities in revolt go over to the player with the most tokens in his/her stock after taxes have been paid. The order in which revolts occur is in AST order, and if two players both have the same maximum number of tokens in their stocks, the recipient is decided in AST order.

Thus revolts generally occur to empires which have grown too big in some uncontrollable manner, and the recipient of cities in revolt is invariably the smallest empire on the board. However, it should be noted that revolts are, by and large, fairly rare, and usually result from player

incompetence. The one exception is that a revolt can be engineered if the player concerned was nominated in a civil war in the previous turn, and this resulted in him/her having too many cities and too few tokens in stock!

Ship construction

In the Ship Construction phase, players should build and/or maintain ships in AST order. In practice, players tend to do this simultaneously as the rule is not explicit, but is implied by Rule [62] on page 16 of the rule book. However, players further down the AST are perfectly within their rights to insist upon strict AST order being observed. There are occasions when a player's decision of whether or not to build or maintain ships will critically depend upon what other players have decided. If those players are higher up the AST, just watch what they do and make your decision accordingly.

Movement

In the Movement phase, movement is sequential in the order of the largest to the smallest populations, with ties being resolved in AST order. Since combat occurs more or less simultaneously, it is a disadvantage (except in the early turns) to move first, and the player moving last can possess an enormous strategic advantage. This is probably the single most important balancing mechanism in the game. In practice, it makes it virtually impossible to eliminate players, and gives small empires a defensive edge over their larger neighbours.

Conflict

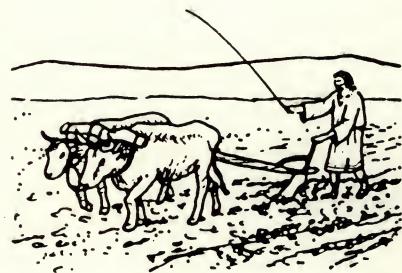
In the Conflict phase, the order of play is only important if a token shortage is possible. Then, a player under attack may insist upon resolving first all conflicts involving only tokens, before dealing with those involving tokens attacking cities.

This is particularly important because conflicts between tokens and cities require the defending cities to convert into at least six tokens; if there are insufficient tokens in the player's treasury, the city will surrender. The rule governing the surrender of cities implies that the best time to attack another player's cities is when he/she has few or no tokens in his/her stock, and then, the attack should be a limited one directed only at cities.

City building

In the City Building phase, play is in AST order. As with ship construction, city building is not simultaneous, and a player

is perfectly entitled to insist upon players higher up the AST making their decisions first, as to whether to build any more cities. The reasons for insisting on this are subtle.



First, it should be pointed out that the rules do not compel a player to build a city if the conditions for city construction are satisfied; the players have a choice as to whether or not to add to their city numbers. The reason for the players having this choice is to enable them to manipulate the order of play in the Trade Card Acquisition phase so as, on the one hand, to maximise the number of trade cards they acquire, and on the other, to avoid disasters. Only the very best players will be constantly aware of this stratagem during the hurly-burly of play.

Trade card acquisition

In the Trade Card Acquisition phase, the order of play is from the smallest to the largest (in terms of cities), with ties being resolved (yes, you guessed it) in AST order. This is yet another of the wonderful subtleties of the game. It is deliberately designed to ensure that the largest empires pick up their trade cards last and, in so doing, increases the chances that they will end up getting fewer cards than their smaller neighbours.

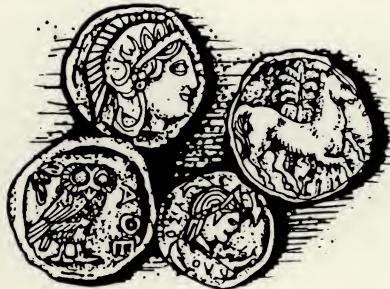


There is no point in having more cities than anyone else if this results in you gaining fewer trade cards than anyone else simply because the trade decks were depleted prior to your turn to pick up! The good players will be aware of this, and will carefully adjust the size of their empires according to what the other players are doing.

When it comes time to exchange trade cards for civilization cards, the order of play is in reverse AST order. This is the only instance in the game where this occurs. All things being equal, the players at the bottom of the AST normally have a higher chance of finding some of the trade card decks depleted when they pick up their cards. To offset this, they are given the first opportunity to purchase the relatively rare civilization cards.

Calamity resolution

In the Calamity Resolution phase, the order of play goes in ascending order of the disaster number. This can be important for players affected by more than one disaster, since it can mitigate the effect of the later disasters. For instance, if a player has picked up both the Famine and Flood cards, he could lose tokens on his/her flood plain to the famine and end up avoiding the flood completely.



STRATEGY

Now that you have some idea of how the game is played, and how its many components interact with each other, how do you develop a winning strategy? One aspect of this game is that there is no one, single winning strategy. There is, however, a winning approach to how the game should be played, which consists of six maxims.

The first maxim is to achieve the maximum population growth in the first five or six turns without affecting your progress on the AST. This involves delaying building your first cities as long as possible, and spreading out to occupy as much territory as is possible without becoming involved in fruitless border disputes. If you delay building your first city until the fifth turn, you can have six cities by the sixth turn. In contrast, building two cities in the fourth turn leaves you so short of population that you will have only three cities in the sixth turn; this will leave you short of trade cards in the early trading sessions.

The second maxim is to aim to have a medium number of cities throughout most of the second to the fifth epochs; the ideal

number is six or seven, depending upon circumstances. Sticking to this should, on average, maximise the number of trade cards picked up every turn. It should also make it easier to manipulate your place in the order of play so as to avoid the worse disasters.



The third maxim is to maintain a healthy distribution of your tokens between the stock, treasury and map, and to avoid where possible having too many tokens in one of these three locations. This should ensure that you are in the best position to avoid the problems associated with over-population and inflation. There are four ways of controlling your token distribution: deliberately killing off population on the board by over-stacking, maintaining four ships on the board, partly paying for civilization cards with treasury tokens, and purchasing the Coinage card as soon as practically possible.

The fourth maxim is to offer mutually profitable trade deals wherever possible. It is not a good idea to squeeze the last drop out of a trade deal. It is also good policy to be truthful about your trade packages (except, of course, when you are attempting to pass on a disaster card). If you follow this maxim consistently, players will tend to want to deal with you in the future because they will know they are going to get a square deal.

The fifth maxim concerns the ideal policy on how to distribute disasters should you be unfortunate enough to get landed with one. In the early stages up until the end of the Bronze Age, the best policy is to distribute disasters evenly amongst the other players. Even so, there are occasions when somebody will be particularly deserving of the maximum permissible dose, and that is perfectly acceptable should it occur. However, later on, from about the start of the Iron Age onwards, disasters should be directed exclusively at the leaders wherever possible in an attempt to slow down, or even stop, their progress on the AST.

The sixth, and final, maxim is to maintain a low profile on the map, and a high one in the trading sessions. In particular, don't make unnecessary waves such as launch-

ing unprovoked attacks on your neighbours. If you have to attack somebody, make sure it is for a good reason, and immediately apologise, explaining your reasons for the attack. And, above all, maintain a flexible approach in your actions at all times.

CALAMITIES

Following on from the general considerations discussed above, I shall continue the discussion of game strategy by considering the eight disasters and the ten starting positions, and finish up with some observations about trading and the best mixes of civilization cards to aim for.

As observed earlier in this article, the disasters are subdivided into two blocks, those which affect the player who picked the card up, and those which affect the player to whom the card was passed in a trade deal. The former consists of Volcano/Earthquake, Famine, Civil War and Flood, while the latter consists of Epidemic, Civil Disorder, Iconoclasm & Heresy and Piracy. Before we discuss each of them in turn, an important point should be made concerning the black-backed disasters in general. If you pick one up, and decide to pass it on to another player in a trade deal, the victim should be chosen carefully. By the time these cards turn up, it should be fairly obvious who is doing well and who is doing badly. Under no circumstances should one be passed on to the players who are doing relatively badly. These disaster cards are potent weapons to be aimed only at the leaders. They are the most active traders in the game, and they always want valuable cards. As soon as it becomes obvious during a trade session what commodity one of the leaders is after, make up a trade package consisting of that commodity and the disaster card and offer it him. And you should make sure the disaster is well disguised, throwing in another relatively high value commodity if necessary.



Volcano/Earthquake is the least damaging of all the disasters. There are only three volcano sites on the map: Vesuvius and Etna in Italy, and Santorini in the Aegean Sea. If any of your tokens or cities are on one of these volcano sites, the volcano erupts and all units are lost. If you do not occupy a volcano site, one of your cities is struck by an earthquake and is reduced instead; this involves replacing the

city with a number of tokens equal to the carrying capacity of the area.

The best means of mitigating the effect of this disaster depends upon whether you have a volcano or an earthquake. If it is a volcano, place population tokens only in the volcano sites. Although all the volcano sites are natural city locations, it is not a good idea to set up a city in one of them because it is relatively difficult to rebuild it. If, on the other hand, it is an earthquake, it is best to choose a city located in a high population carrying capacity area since this makes it easier to rebuild. The only exception to this is if you have a city on a 3-site, and reduction will lead to a token shortage in your stock and taxation problems in the next turn. If you have a city located adjacent to another player's city, you have the option of reducing that player's city as well; whether you do so will depend upon the game position at that time, and it is best to follow a flexible policy on this. You might even be able to force some favour out of that player in exchange for not doing it!



Famine is a mixed disaster. Although it forces you to lose nine units (cities counting as five units equivalent), you can force other players to lose up to twenty units, with a maximum of eleven from any one player. For this reason, it is one of the 'best' of the game-balancing disasters.

The effect of the disaster can be mitigated if you possess Pottery and at least one grain; in this case, for every grain card held, you reduce the number of units lost by four. This is obviously the perfect defence against famine, but it does have the double drawback that Pottery is one of the cheapest civilization cards available and it ties up grain cards which might be better used either in obtaining better trade deals or in purchasing another civilization card.



4 CIVIL WAR

Civil War is one of the most potentially crippling of the disasters. If you have picked it up, you choose a nominee from among the other players. You and your nominee then divide your civilization into two parts; you choose

one, and your nominee gets the other! Usually, one of the parts must contain thirty five units (with cities again counting as five units equivalent), provided you do not hold Philosophy and/or Democracy. If you hold Philosophy, your nominee must be the player with the least number of tokens in his/her stock, (this might be you!) and fifteen units secede to the nominee. If you hold Democracy (and not Philosophy), one of the two parts must contain forty five units.

The one certain way to avoid the effects of Civil War is to keep your civilization to thirty five units or less (or forty five if you hold Democracy). Another method is to maintain a mental count of the number of grain cards in the grain deck, and thereby know when the Civil War card will turn up. Then, by manipulating the number of cities you own, it is possible to avoid picking the card up.

If, despite all your efforts, you do pick up Civil War, there are two ways to mitigate its effect. If you have a very big civilization, choose as your nominee a player with an equally big civilization. Careful calculation may ensure that the nominee will lose most of the seceding units by revolt because of token and city shortage, and you might get them back provided you have the most tokens in your stock.

The second way is to choose as your nominee the player with the weakest position and make him an offer. This will usually involve the nominee choosing those units whose loss is least damaging to your overall position. Whatever way, Civil War is always vicious; do everything you can to avoid it.



5 FLOOD

lightly populated, avoid building cities in it unless the site is elevated above the plain, and get Engineering as quickly as possible.

If you have been counting the cloth cards, and suspect that you will pick up flood, it might be worthwhile moving some tokens into someone else's flood plain; that player's units will be affected by the disaster as well!



6

EPIDEMIC

The recipient may then spread the epidemic among the other players, forcing them to lose up to twenty five units, with no more than ten from any one player. However, the player who passed on the Epidemic card is immune to this spread of the epidemic; the lack of side-effects makes this disaster a good one to pass on. The effect of an epidemic can be mitigated to some effect if you hold Medicine. Should the card be traded to you, you can at least affect your rivals for the lead. Consequently, the Epidemic is probably the least terrifying of the tradable disasters.



7

CIVIL DISORDER

The effect of the Civil Disorder disaster increases with the civilization size. Provided the recipient has more than four cities, and does not hold Law or Democracy, the excess are reduced. If the recipient holds Law, only cities in excess of five are reduced, and if he/she holds Democracy, cities in excess of six are reduced. Civil Disorder is a good card to trade to one of the leaders for two reasons. The first is that the leaders usually have a large number of cities, and this disaster can chop them down in size considerably. The second is that the recipient is the only player to suffer, and the player who traded it suffers no side-effects apart from the victim's wrath.



ICONOCLASM & HERESY

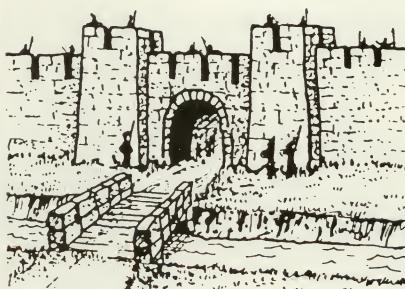
Iconoclasm & Heresy is a terrible disaster, particularly for players who do not hold Law or Philosophy. In this case, the recipient loses four cities by reduction. Unlike Civil Disorder, he/she may also order the reduction of two cities owned

Law, only three cities are reduced, and if he/she holds Philosophy, only two cities are reduced. Similar decreases apply to the recipient's counterattack. However, the one to watch out for is the combination of Civil Disorder with Iconoclasm & Heresy. This can be a killer for anyone without Law: the former reduces the recipient to four cities, and the latter knocks these out! This, in turn, forces the recipient backwards on the AST; this combination should be exclusively aimed at the leader if at all possible.



PIRACY

9
Piracy is potentially the worse disaster of all. The recipient loses one coastal city for every ship owned by the player who traded the card. Consequently, the recipient could lose up to four cities. If this should happen, the effect is worse than Iconoclasm & Heresy since, in that case, the cities are only reduced, whereas piracy removes the city completely, and leaves nothing behind. An obvious motto comes immediately to mind: be wary of 'Greeks bearing gifts' – especially in ships!



STARTING POSITIONS

The ten starting positions are not all equal; the ones with better potential usually have a combination of excellent terrain to expand into and a relatively easy track on the AST. I shall now consider them in AST order.

Africa

Africa has one of the easiest tracks on the AST, as well as a low end-game target total of 1200 points. Its position at the head of the AST also makes it relatively easy to avoid disasters, but is a disadvantage when purchasing civilization cards. This implies that you must look ahead when planning what to purchase.

The AST advantages are offset by Africa's poor *lebensraum*, and this is made

more critical by the location of the natural city sites in the best population areas. Africa should therefore build at least one of the famous 'desert' cities (twelve tokens converted into a city in one of its 1-areas), claim as much of north Africa as possible, and should be prepared to go to war over Sicily. Agriculture is an essential acquisition given the lack of breathing room. These problems are reduced by the WXB leaf, and this has been offset by the larger end-game target of 1300 points.

Iberia

Iberia has a relatively easy track on the AST, and a low end-game target of 1200 points. This is offset by a lack of natural city sites, one of which is in a flood plain. Although Italy is not in play when the WXB leaf is used, most of the Italian peninsula will have been claimed by the time you get there. Build a couple of 'desert' cities in Iberia, and try to get Agriculture.

Italy

Italy is one of the blue chip starting positions, possessing an easy track on the AST, plenty of natural city sites, and a medium end-game target of 1300 points. Aim to occupy all of the Italian peninsula, and the Balkan coast as far south as Corfu. It really is too easy playing Italy, and the other players should be aware of it.

Illyria

Illyria is a very difficult starting position. ('What should I do in Illyria?') This is because its two neighbours Italy and Thrace have easier AST tracks and consequently tend to be chosen first. If this happens there is nowhere to expand into, and the position should not be chosen. However, if the WXB leaf is in use, Illyria effectively takes up Italy's position in the standard game. Its slightly more difficult AST track and maximum end-game target of 1400 points balances this part of the map out nicely. You can now have a viable game with it.

Thrace

Thrace has an AST track of about the same degree of difficulty as Italy's. However, it suffers from a lack of natural city sites, and the Danube Delta flood plain. Consequently, it should insist upon a frontier with Italy located as far west as possible, and a frontier with Asia/Assyria as far east in southern Ukraine as possible. It would also be an advantage to acquire Agriculture.



Crete

Crete's central starting location is a relatively difficult one, offset partly by its low end-game target of 1200. Although there is no shortage of city sites in Greece and Asia Minor, there is a lack of breathing space. This is accentuated by the necessity to build ships to get off the island of Crete in the early stages. Once these ships have been built, Crete always moves last in the race to occupy as much land as possible before the first bout of city building. Consequently, you should concentrate upon creating a constantly mobile population, and the acquisition of both Agriculture and Astronomy are essential.

Asia

Asia has a relatively difficult AST track, which is not helped by the high end-game target of 1400. It also tends to be crowded out by Assyria. Consequently, it is advisable to choose Asia only if Babylon has not been chosen; in this case, Asia and Assyria have plenty of room to expand into. If Assyria and Babylon have already been chosen, avoid Asia like the plague.

Assyria

Assyria is another blue chip starting position to rank along side Italy. However, its slightly harder AST track and higher end-game target of 1400 make it more of a challenge to play. You should aim to expand into Asia Minor and to the Med coast at Antioch, working out sensible frontiers with Crete and Babylon. If Asia is in play in place of Babylon, it is probably best to let Asia have Asia Minor, and take over the normal Babylonian position yourself. However, allowing Asia through into the Babylonian position is equally viable.

Babylon

Babylon has an excellent area to expand into on the map, despite the huge Euphrates flood plain. However, its AST track is extremely difficult because of the early first barrier. Against good players, the best policy is probably to go for maximum city expansion in the early stage and

take a deliberate stop for one turn at the first barrier. You will then have to attempt to ensure that all the other players make at least one stop later in the game. If Egypt is also in the game, and follows the same policy, it is advisable to cooperate closely with him/her on this. Apart from this, it is advisable to avoid building more than one low lying city on the flood plain unless it is absolutely necessary.

Egypt

Egypt has a similar problem to Babylon, and should follow a similar policy. It is essential to expand into Palestine and claim as many of the city sites there as possible. It is also advisable to agree to a sensible frontier with Africa and thereby avoid trouble on that side. And whatever you do, avoid building cities in the Nile Delta if at all possible.



TRADING

In the trading sessions, your primary aim should be to build up a set of trade cards with a value as large as possible. This generally means concentrating on one commodity at a time, and trying to corner the market in that commodity. The best commodities to concentrate upon are Salt, Grain, Cloth, Bronze and Spice. The first four commodities tend to be used as short change to fill up a trade package, but if you manage to make up a full set they complement your hand very nicely. Although Gems and Gold can make up substantial sets, there are not many of them, and the number of players with eight or nine cities is usually low. Even if you do not have nine cities, it is useful to convert eighteen tokens in your treasury whenever possible. It gains you a useful card to trade with players who do have nine cities, and helps relieve your inflation problems. It is also a good idea to offer trade packages of four or more cards every now and then; this may make it easier to conceal a disaster card in the deal if that opportunity arises.

CARDS

There is no ideal set of civilization cards to collect. If somebody maintained that such a set existed, the maximum limit of

eleven cards per player would make things very tight in the five, six and seven player games. However, some general guidelines can be given. Any winning set must contain at least two of the three civic cards Law, Philosophy and Democracy, and preferably all three. The easiest way to acquire Law is to pick up Literacy and Architecture first; together, they knock forty points off the price of Law. Philosophy can be purchased very cheaply if you also acquire Music and the five science cards: Mysticism, Astronomy, Coinage, Medicine, and Engineering; this reduces the price of Philosophy to seventy. The purchase price of Democracy can be reduced to one hundred and ten with the additional purchase of the four craft cards Pottery, Cloth Making, Metal Working and Agriculture.

The order in which you purchase your cards should be partly decided by two criteria. The first is to buy them in the sequence which makes the entire set you aim to collect as cheap as possible. The second criterion should be based on whether the purchase advances you past all barriers on the AST in the shortest number of turns. The problem here is that getting past one barrier 'easily' may create problems at the next barrier. The most critical example of this dilemma is evidenced by a decision to purchase lots of cheap cards in order to obtain the seven cards required to pass the third barrier; this may make it extremely difficult to acquire an additional four cards with the values required to push your net total to the one thousand points required to pass the fourth barrier. However, it is sometimes not possible to stick to these criteria. This is usually caused by buying pressure on specific cards.

The trickiest decision to be made is usually connected with the order in which the cards belonging to a particular colour group are bought. The natural order is to buy from cheapest to dearest, largely because this makes it easier to pass the early barriers. However, it can be advantageous to buy some of the expensive ones first in order to create a shortage in them. This is a particularly important consideration in the five, six and seven player games.

The mix of civilization cards to aim for is also critically determined by the number of players in the game. If the number is four or less, there is no card shortage, and it is generally best to aim for the high value cards unless this causes problems during the approaches to the barriers on the AST. With larger numbers of players, it is worthwhile going for some of the cheaper cards if only to ease your passage

along the AST. However, you must make sure, firstly, that you pick up a substantial proportion of the highest value cards, and secondly, that your main rivals miss out on more of them.

In conclusion, *Civilization* is an excellent multi-player game for those who like long games which require considerable thought, concentration and decision making. As a final point, I'll leave you with a recommendation not to use the Avalon Hill expansion set. The additional trade cards mean that the disasters are less frequent, and this upsets the entire play balance of the game. G

Civilization is a game for two to seven players; designed by Francis Tresham and originally published by Hartland Trefoil; it is now also marketed under licence by Avalon Hill and Gibsons Games. Players should be aware of which set they are playing with: there are slight differences, principally in the sequence of play, between the Hartland rules and the Avalon Hill rules.

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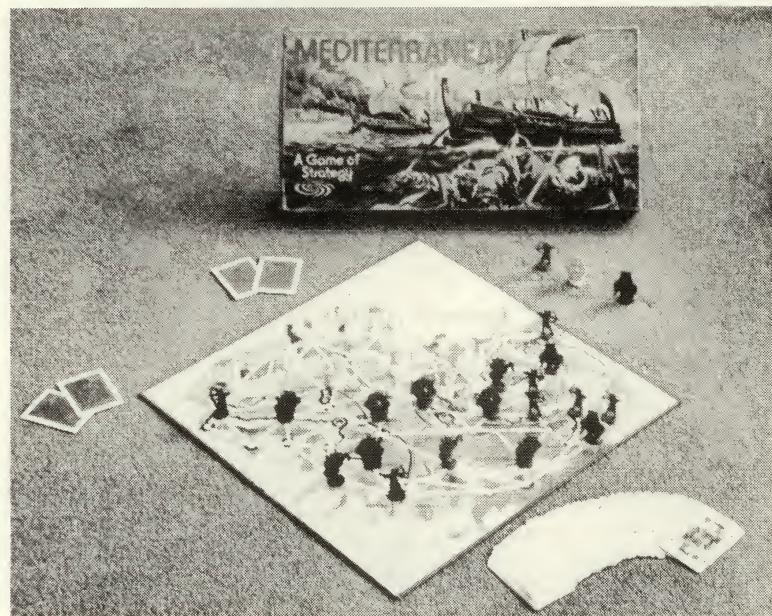
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ACCESS

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MEDITERRANEAN
Parker Brothers
1974 - 1975



Derek Carver

Having many friends and contacts in the games industry around the world, I like to think that there are few good games published that somehow or other are not brought to my attention. And in this I am largely correct. But from time to time a gem does appear that I and my informants totally miss. It would be reasonable to assume that these overlooked treasures are the products of some small private publisher with minuscule circulation, but 'No'. I somehow get to hear about these. The gems to which I refer are always the products of one of the major game producers.

It is a sad fact that several decades of games buying has taught me that nothing but trivia can normally be expected from the big names – the firms known to the general public. Despite their enormous output the names of Waddingtons, Spears, Parker, Milton Bradley, hardly feature on my shelves. The result is that when one of these firms *does* produce a really good game – as if by accident – I ignore it, it being tainted by the appalling mediocrity of its fellows.

Such a game was **Mediterranean**, published by Parker Bros in 1974/5.

The game itself was nothing special to look at, although sufficiently well made.

The box was pretty garish and, like a lot of games, was out of keeping with the mood of the contents, so one could easily be put off.

Inside was a board depicting the Mediterranean coastline, showing cities linked by land and sea routes. There were some nicely made plastic pieces in four colours – ships, knights on horseback, elephants and foot soldiers. Each player has a total of seven pieces only, so there is not a lot to think about on that score. Additionally there was a pack of normal playing cards, which was something of a let-down although they worked well enough. There were also four special cards, but as the effect of these is merely to prolong the game unnecessarily, I will ignore them in this article, just as we ignore them in play.

Players play two sides, with special rules to accommodate three players. As can be imagined, each piece has a special movement and attack function. However, it is best at this stage to mention the playing cards, which are at the core of this superb game.

Each player is represented by a suit (spades, hearts and so on), and at the outset receives the 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, J, Q and K of his suit. The remaining cards (all the odd numbers) are shuffled together, forming a draw pile from which each player takes one card at the beginning of his turn. Each card is worth its face value except

the pictures. Jack and Queen are each worth zero, and the King is worth 15. These cards are used for combat as follows:

Battles

Two contestants with a piece occupying the same city space select two cards from their hands and place them face down (although if their capital is at that moment in enemy hands they may play only one card). These are simultaneously revealed. Whoever plays the highest total wins and the opposing piece is permanently removed from play. In the case of a tie both play a further card. If both play zero there is a stand off. If either player plays cards totalling '2' he can count them as 2, as normal, or declare himself 'A Spy'. As a spy he has the right to play two new cards, knowing by this time, of course, the value played by his opponent. His battle strength is the total of the two new cards.

At the end of the battle, all cards played except Jacks and Queens go onto the discard to be shuffled and brought back into play later. This also includes any numerical cards used in the spying attempt. Jacks and Queens are returned to the player's hand. Kings are a special case: they are discarded but they go right out of the game. In other words, this special 15 point card can be used only once. It is important, of course, that a player does not

allow his hand to get too depleted because he replaces used cards at only one per turn. The effect of the pieces is also cleverly worked out:

Elephants – (1) move one space on land. They also double the value of any card used in combat against land pieces.

Knights – (1) move up to two spaces on land. They double the value of the weaker of two cards used in combat against all pieces.

Ships – (2) move from one port to the next.

Foot soldiers – (3) move one space on land.

During a player's turn he may move one piece or two foot soldiers. A player can have a second turn if he surrenders one or

more cards with a total minimum value of three. A turn comprises, therefore:

1. Draw a card from the pack showing it to the other players before adding it to one's hand (I seem to remember that the rules for the French version did not ask for the card to be shown, but I may be wrong).
2. Move.
3. Combat.

The game is won by a team: a) When the team occupies the opponents' two capitals for one complete round, or b) When the opposing team has no more pieces.

The above is a summary of the main rules for four players. There is a slight modification for two players and there are special rules for three players.

Given the enormous number of copies of this game which must have been produced, it is remarkable that I have never consciously seen a single copy on sale in this country, either new or second hand. Mine reached me via a third person, who found it in a charity shop. But there must still be plenty around and this is truly a game that is worth looking out for. I do not know whether it ever received an American publication. I think it must have been published later in France because I remember seeing copies on sale in Paris, but I learned what a great game it was too late to get one. So keep your eyes open for **Mediterranean**. You won't regret it.

In fact, if any reader has in his collection of oddments from childhood a white foot-soldier I'd welcome it, as my set is missing this piece!

GI

VARIANTS

The Games Clinic

AXIS AND ALLIES

Although MB did an excellent job in their production of this mammoth wargame, they mysteriously left out most of the optional rules from the original Nova edition of the game.

Ever anxious to put wrong to right, we are pleased to be able to publish the missing items. In particular, we would strongly recommend using the special characteristics for each country.

Weapons Development

At the beginning of his player turn, before he 'buys' his playing pieces, a player may spend money on weapons development. For each 500 in production certificates that he puts in the box he rolls one die. Each roll that comes up a 6 entitles him to one special weapon (see the weapons development chart on the gameboard). He then rolls dice again, once for each 6 that he rolled and places his flag next to that number on the weapons development chart. If he already had that special weapon, he rolls again until he obtains a new special weapon. Special weapons last for

the whole game. The same special weapon may be obtained by more than one player.

In most cases, the special weapons are explained on the chart. Three cases require further explanation:

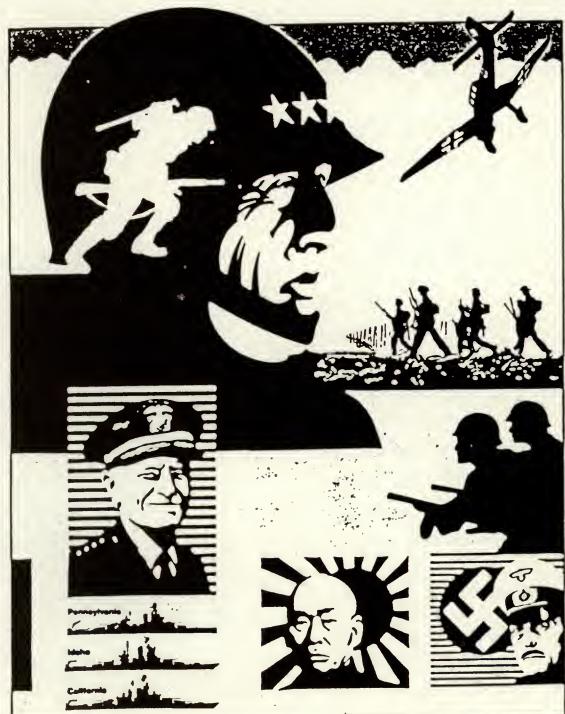
Rockets. If a player develops rockets, he may launch one strategic attack per turn without using bombers. His target province must be no more than two movement points from a province that contains one of his anti-aircraft units. See the rules on Strategic Bombing for its special effects.

The Atomic Bomb. In addition to the capability of producing the atomic bomb, players must pay 1000 in production certificates to produce one. The atomic bomb enters the game like any other new unit – at provinces containing industrial complex units.

1. Atomic bombs, like anti-aircraft and industrial

complex units, can be captured.

2. Atomic bombs must be loaded on bombers (using one movement point) and moved to the province where they will be used.
3. If a player has the special weapon rockets and he also has an atomic bomb



in a province containing one of his anti-aircraft units, he may nuclear attack a province or sea zone up to two provinces away instead of using his strategic attack with the rockets capability. He does not need to use a bomber in this case.

4. Players are limited to one atomic bomb (plus any they capture) on the gameboard at any one time.

5. Nuclear attacks eliminate the atomic bomb plus all units in the province or sea zone (including anti-aircraft and industrial complex units).

6. Atomic bombs may be transported by bombers as well as used for nuclear attack – no more than one bomb per bomber.

Jets. Fighters belonging to a player who has the Jet capability are *not* affected by enemy anti-aircraft first shot attacks.

Special Forces

Each player is given one type of special forces to simulate his branch of the military that was most highly developed, or exhibited unusual characteristics.

TROPPLLE

A three player variant for

Topple, by Neil C Wilson.

For ease of explanation it is assumed that the green counters are not being used by any of the players and are thus available for use as 'wild cards'.

Tropple plays quite similarly to the original game with the following exceptions:

If you throw a 6, you place a green counter anywhere on the board.

If you throw a 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 you may place your counter on any space on the respective level. But you may only do this if i) The space is unoccupied, or ii) it contains a pile of counters with either your colour or green on top. Thus it may be possible that you cannot place your counter. In this instance those players blocking you each receive one point per space they block. For example, the yellow player throws a 2. Of the four level 2 spaces, red occupies one and blue the other three. Therefore

Soviets. The Soviet player may move one of his industrial complex units each turn (during movement phase) at a rate of 1 movement point.

German. The German player may designate one of his armour units as the SS Panzerkorps during each of his player turns. Indicate this by placing a German flag on top of the armour unit. At the beginning of his next turn, the German player may move this flag to any of his armour units he wishes to be the Panzerkorps. If the Panzerkorps has been eliminated, he may designate a new armour unit to be the Panzerkorps at the beginning of his next turn. The SS Panzerkorps eliminates enemy units when attacking with a 1-4 and when defending with a 1-5.

British. All British infantry in the province of the United Kingdom are treated as special units. Instead of inflicting a loss on enemy attacking units on a 1 or 2, they eliminate enemy units on die rolls of 1-3.

Japanese. The Japanese player can designate one of his fighter units in each of his player turns as a kamikaze unit. That unit

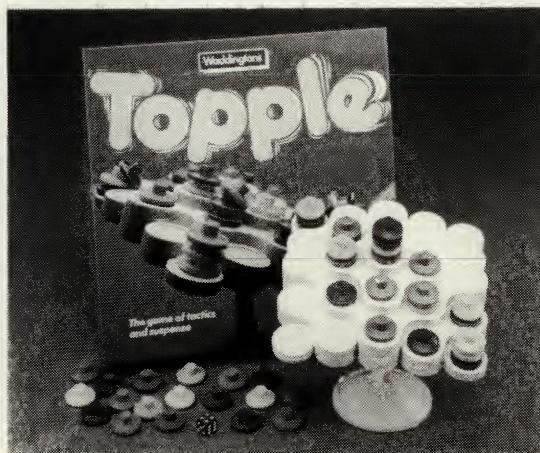
red scores one point, and blue three.

Note that for normal scoring purposes, a green counts as your own colour. So if a pile went (from bottom up) yellow, green, red, green, and yellow put a counter on top, then a score of four would be achieved (two greens and two yellows).

When there are no greens remaining, a player rolling a 6 may place his counter anywhere.

The game continues until either a Topple, or when all players have played their own counters. G

Topple is published by Waddingtons, price £8.99.



may be moved up to its full movement allowance to attack with the intention that it will not successfully land. Whether it survives the attack or not, the kamikaze fighter unit is eliminated at the end of the attack phase. Kamikazes attack with a 1-4.

Americans. The American player can designate all the infantry units in one amphibious assault that he makes in his player turn as marines. They inflict losses in that attack on a 1 or 2, not just a 1. The rules governing Panzerkorps identification and placement also apply to marine units. G

Axis & Allies is published by MB games, price £24.99.



DANGEROUS CARGOES

A variant for Auf Achse, by John Humphries.

When a player arrives at a start town with an empty truck, including the first turn, he *may* elect to throw the die. If an odd number is rolled, the load about to be picked up is designated a 'dangerous cargo'. A coin or counter is placed on the respective order card and another on the truck. The player must then move to his destination without collecting any further loads. The truck can only be moved when an odd number is rolled. Other trucks can overtake the 'dangerous cargo' but may not end their turn within one space of it. If the throw would land them immediately behind the 'dangerous cargo', they drop back one space. If one space in front, they move forward one further space. If the player lands on an 'event' card space, this has no effect.

When the player reaches his destination with the 'dangerous cargo', he receives twice the value shown on the order card. All other rules apply. G

Auf Achse is published by F X Schmid. Available from Just Games, price £19.95.

chart

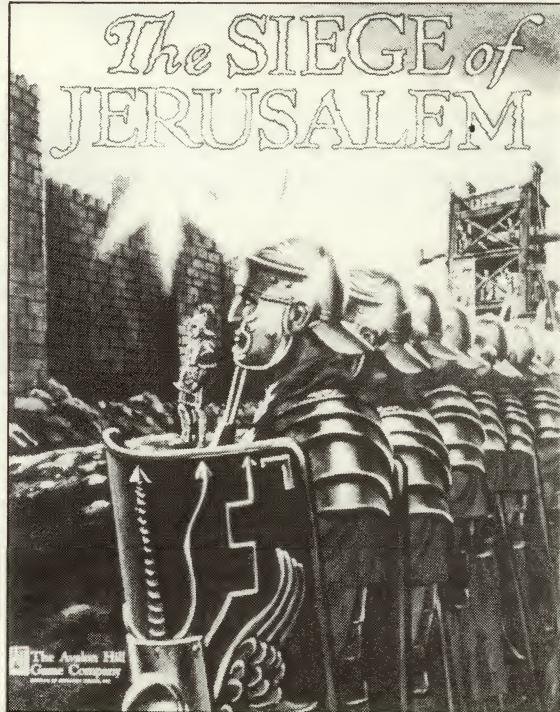
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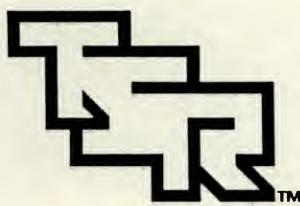
Games review monthly

A reference guide to all the games covered in GIs 1-10, compiled by George Crawshay.

Opposite each entry is shown the number(s) of the issue(s) featuring the game, together with a code describing in which section of the issue it appears. Code explanations follow:

AR	Abstract Game Review	Backgammon	10-CpR	Diplomacy	3-FA 6-DIG
CpR	Computer Game Review	Bantu	4-RIP	DLE2 Dragon Magic (AD&D)	9-RPR
CR	Card Game Review	Baseball Strategy	2-TA 8-DIG	Doolittle & Waite	2-DIG
DIG	Desert Island Games	Bataille de Albuera-Espagnol	6-WR	Dragonlance	2-GR
DN	Design Notes	Batman Role-Playing Game	8-RPR	Dune	5-DIG
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RIP	R.I.P or Gone But Not Forgotten	Bowlbound	1-TA	Eighteen Thirty	1-DIG 6-V 7-DIG 9-SS
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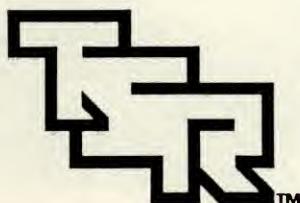
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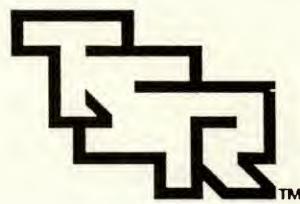
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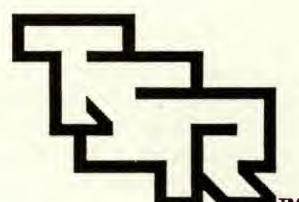
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10th Anniversary Year



DESERT ISLAND GAMES

Swiss roled

Former fanzine rebel, White Dwarf editor and Sid Yobbo impersonator, *Ian Marsh* decides what games to take on one of his frequent skiing holidays.

Worried about the large number of games players that have been disappearing on world cruises, this year I elect to fly to my holiday destination of Switzerland. I am comforted by the fact that the flight path takes me well away from the Bermuda Triangle, which is just as well because my copy of *Illuminati* (Steve Jackson) is the first game to go into the hand luggage.

Space is tight and luggage allowances are limited, so I appreciate entertaining games that fit comfortably into the ridiculously sized pockets that airline travel bags are designed to have. *Illuminati* isn't exactly a game to set up on a crowded aeroplane but it's easily explained to other people. That and the comforting position of being inside the Secret Masters of Fandom mean victory is assured...

The game mechanism behind *Illuminati* is quite neat: its disadvantages are the tiny banknotes and the crazy addition sums that power struggles can involve.

A LOAD OF BULL

Also in the hand luggage goes Waddingtons' card game *Pit*. This commodity trading game is entertaining, easy to teach and learn, and provides several hours of hoarse-throated fun. If space were really short, I would take *Pit* rather than *Illuminati*.

The real reason behind taking *Pit* is to soften up players for a mammoth session of *Civilization*. I pack the Avalon Hill version because the clarity of the map and counters wins out over the Tresham original or the HP Gibson edition which has

the professional gloss but lacks clear design. In too goes the trading card expansion pack to add variety.

Civilization has elegant mechanisms to resolve conflict and taxation which enhance what is an enjoyable, thought-provoking game: I would be far happier, however, if it took half as much time to complete.

WINNING ANGLE

Sticking to what can loosely be termed ancient battles, **Britannia** (Gibsons and Avalon Hill) is carefully squeezed into the suitcase. It's possibly the best thing that Lew Pulsipher ever contributed to gaming, and almost makes up for his turgid columns in *White Dwarf*. Readers at least had the advantage of reading the stuff only once: pity the editorial staff who had to read it three or four times!

Britannia covers a period of history I enjoy: from the Roman invasion of Britain through the Dark Ages and up to the beginning of Norman Britain (*Sounds like a cabinet minister – Ed*). Again, it is the game's balance and the simple yet realistic combat mechanism that appeal: elegance of design in a game always impresses me.

Britannia is also fascinating because of the factions that each player controls: although each player is assigned one colour of token, the counter mix is split into different races within each faction and each sub-grouping is usually divorced from its allied ones on the board. Small groups are especially vulnerable, and it is keeping a race such as the Jutes alive that provides some of the appeal of the game. It's a game I don't particularly care if I win or lose because of the enjoyment it provides in play.

GOLDEN BANANA

I do care, however, whether I win or lose games of **Junta** (West End), again a game which I play for fun but for which I have a less than sparkling success rate. The only mark of achievement I've received so far is the Golden Banana for coming last at a *Junta* tournament at KōanCon –



and by the time that arrived it was partly rotten. I can never see where I go wrong, and that old conspiracy theory just keeps on becoming reality: with a healthy wedge of cash, a safe bank and two assassin cards in my own hand, I still get shot and lose everything.

Junta again has elegant, simple game mechanics and a small counter mix. It also has player interaction at several stages which makes it an involving game and also determines which forces a player controls on the map come the revolution. All this requires masterful dealing with El Presidente, who should never be trusted. And after that, it's not the winning or the losing that's important: it's how often I get to play the minister that matters.

STRIPY TABLES

Napoleonic wargaming started me on the games trail, and for the many hours of enjoyment it provided SPI's **La Grande Armée**, covering Napoleon's 1805 to 1809 campaigns against Austria and Prussia, would vie for a place with **Wellington's Victory** and **Napoleon's Last Battles**. **Wellington's Victory** is sorely in need of some time to study the rules and to play more than just a section: on holiday I might just find time to get to grips with it. **Napoleon's Last Battles** is far more accessible and as well as providing tactical game play also provide an element of campaign play, versatility which is much appreciated. In the end, however, **Wellington's Victory** would probably take priority: it's slightly lighter than packing an army or three of 1:300 metal figures.

TRIVIA TRASH

None of this is particularly accessible to some of my friends, so a general board-game also has to be crammed into the bulging suitcase. Last on the list is **Trivial Pursuit**: I hate it for not being a game and

for being a terrible embarrassment to inflict on acquaintances. Among equals it's merely a challenge to see who can manipulate the die to finish first. And it's risky to play with strangers: who wants to alienate potential friends by playing something that can make a player seem stupid?

I briefly consider **Pictionary**, the only game of the parlour game boom which requires wit rather than memory to win. But there's bound to be a copy lying around the chalet, so into the suitcase goes **Chartbuster**. ASL's game of the pop world of 1970 is a hoot: psychedelic logos, venues such as the Flowerpot Club and the Champagne Chateau, and Tony Blackburn too – his lovely mug graces the box top. **Chartbuster** is all about making a record, getting it to number one and selling a million copies.

No dice are used: movement depends upon the type of car the pop stars can afford. A Rolls-Royce is best and the winner is usually the player who can afford it first: there is only one available. Lesser pop stars have to make do with transport such as a Jaguar or a Ford van. Forget the unpleasant song titles included in the game such as *Roses for You* and *London by Night*; instead bring punk to the late 1960s club scene and let rip. It's worth playing once, and that's about all because the board, the club names and the movement system are the best elements.

BITE THE HAND

Games Workshop has turned out a few good games in the past year or two, and from these I make sure that **The Fury of Dracula** and **Kings and Things*** don't get missed from the packing list.

Out of the rash of multi-tiled games that broke out in the specialised games market, **Kings and Things*** wins because it works best and I haven't yet got tired of it. **Chill Black Morn Manor** has too many 'so what?' endings to be appealing in the long run; few people will allow me to play the trolls in the garishly coloured **Elfquest** boardgame, and **The Worlds of Boris Vallejo** doesn't bear thinking about because it is truly dreadful. Tom Wham also drew appealing counters for **Kings and Things***, and it's the cartoon craziness that keeps it fresh. It's a pity that Games Workshop didn't design it and relied instead on a team-up with West End Games.

The Fury of Dracula is a game that I don't own, but would make sure I borrowed for the trip. It's faintly ridiculous that Games Workshop should ditch its games so quickly after releasing them, es-

pecially when there is probably still demand. But this isn't the place to rant about self-advertising and house magazines working against themselves. **The Fury of Dracula** has provided me with some entertaining evenings, although I wouldn't care to play it often. Some fine ideas are muddied slightly by the hard to follow mapboard and over-chancey escape cards.

The last boardgame I choose to pack, mainly to ensure it goes in, is **Tales of the Arabian Nights** (West End), which I enjoy because of its role-playing and storytelling potential. It's a well thought out game which must have taken its designer a long time to complete: the encounter book is quite an achievement. It would work for other game backgrounds too, such as Arthur and the knights of the round table. But perhaps that is best left

to role-playing, so I cheat and cram in my long-term rolegame project set in post-Arthurian Britain. You never know when the mood to write will strike!

Safely aboard the aeroplane and heading towards the Alps, the pilot announces that the flight is being diverted to Zurich. I curse the Illuminati gnomes, but their attempt to take over a Secret Master of Fandom fails. The Bermuda Triangle flukily extends its influence and picks up the aircraft on the backlash. The plane crashes in tropical seas and, as in **Tales of the Arabian Nights**, I drift hungry and thirsty (sic) for many days until I chance upon an island which has Strange Customs (H).

What luck: it's an island of castaways who've managed to save all their games as well!

GI

'THE THINGS PEOPLE SAY'

Bombas away!

'That is, no, we are not Nazis, fascists, communists, running dog imperialists or any other kind of bad guys. We abjure sexism, racism, ageism, etc., and certainly do not advocate armed aggression as any kind of positive solution to today's problems'

– *Ty Bomba in the opening editorial of Command magazine.*

Programmers normal shock!

'Today's programmer is not a spotty 16 year old, sporting an anorak and working from his bedroom. He is often early twenties, has a wife and mortgage, and is capable of holding a conversation in English.'

– *Jon Dean, Chairman of the Society of Software Authors.*

More bomba

'This expansive/revisionist process actually got started back in the early 70s, when the ULTRA revelations first presented us with the likelihood everything we knew was wrong.'

– *Ty Bomba discovers that Hollywood's view of World War Two was somewhat at odds with reality (we think!).*

Scrabble?

'Successful games are either for children or adults, not both. They need to be over in 30-45 minutes with a clear winner.'

– *Ray Perry, Marketing Manager of Spears.*

Porridge news

'It strikes me that, as with many books and periodicals (I'd be curious to know which ones are banned by the Nevada prison system), wargames – in the traditional sense – are excellent tools for broadening one's mind and experience, giving in this case an appreciation of history and world affairs that is lacking in so many of our fellow citizens'

– *Rex Martin, commenting in General on the decision of the Nevada State Prison Authorities to ban wargames in their institutions.*

Sign of the times

'Ferocious and entertaining'
– *The Financial Times on 1830.*

'The best of the stock market games.'
– *The Financial Times on Shark.*

Independent view

'Astronomically complex rules and rather tacky counters'

– *The Independent's film critic Sheila Johnstone, reviewing the Star Wars boardgame.*

What's new?

'We may even bring out disposable games, selling for a couple of pounds. Play them a few times, throw them away, buy another one . . . '

– *Mike Hayes of Serif Games talking to Accountancy magazine.*

Flying tonight

New releases from FASA this month are **Leviathan Ship Briefing** and **Dreamchipper** – a new adventure, which has nothing to do with chip shops, for **Shadowrun**. Both games are available from Chart distributors, prices £8.60 and £5.70 respectively.



Bomba command

Ty Bomba, recently departed editor of **Strategy and Tactics**, has launched his own magazine entitled **Command**. The first issue is out now and includes a game **Blitzkrieg '41**, by Bomba himself. Games planned for the future are said to include **Iron Cross '92 – The War of Reunification** (already), and **White Eagle Rising** in which the Poles rebel against their commie rulers(?). Fans of 'Bomabisms' should keep an eye on **Sniper**.

Open book

The not the new GURPS adventure from Steve Jackson games is **Conan vs Glasnost**. In this fictional story, the mighty Conan books a two week package holiday in Omsk with the aim of crushing the Red Menace, only to discover that it's no longer a menace.

Writbusters

According to **Computer Trade Weekly**, publishers EMAP are being threatened with legal action by Activision. The cause of their ire was a negative review of **Ghostbusters II** which appeared in **Ace** magazine, an EMAP publication. Rumour has it that Activision's legal advisers turned up at the EMAP offices along with the marketing manager the day after the review was discovered, though this intriguing scenario was denied by the publisher. Inevitably, Activision's advertising support for EMAP titles is reported to be 'under discussion'. Unfortunately we cannot proffer any opinion as to the game's merits, or otherwise, because our editor considers such arcade novelties as

NEWS

lowering the tone of the magazine (*there's something to be said for being a snob* – Ed).

DC lives

Mayfair games announce the release of the second edition **DC Heroes Role Playing Game**. This new product 'reflects all the changes that have occurred in the DC Universe since the release of the first edition in 1985'. Included in the package is loads of stuff (*could we be more specific?* – Ed). Specifically included with the game is a character handbook, a background roster book, 75 illustrated character cards, and an action wheel. Plus loads more. Twenty smackers and it's yours.



Everywhere

Another new product from Mayfair is the **Otherwhere Quest**, a new Green Lantern solitaire adventure which features a 'beautiful original cover illustration by Ame Starr' (*any relation to Freddie?* – Ed). Only a fiver to you, sir.

Motor City madness

Palladium Games of Detroit have produced the answer to the question everybody is asking: what became of the characters in the **Robotech** saga who were left behind on earth to confront the invading **Invid**? If you, like us, thought they'd joined Gary Glitter's band, you'd be wrong. To find out exactly what *did* happen to them you'll need to buy **Lancer's Rocker's**. In this new adven-

ture players are armed with 'instrumente-cha' – fantastic musical instruments that double as powerful sonic weapons. Their opponents have at their disposal Radio One thought waves – prolonged exposure to which turns listeners into vegetables. **Lancer's Rockers** should set you back around a fiver. If video is more your thing, then check out **Robotech II – The Sentinels**, though because of compatibility problems European readers will need a monitor to run it

Turtle news

Truckin' Turtles, a new supplement for Palladium's **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** is now available and features such characters as 'Chiquita', described as the 'Steven Spielberg of the spy world'. Whatever that means. The movie based on the series is scheduled for a March 3rd (US) release.

More turtles

From mutant turtles to flying turtles. Specifically the Belgium based company of that name headed by Jean 'bald eagle' Vanaise. Their excellent products such as **Shark**, **Chicago**, and **Kalahen**, are now available by mail order from Custom Games in Sheffield. Telephone 0742 472947.



Shark: now on these shores.

Retailers looking to order these games should contact Hobbygames on 0903 730998. Hobbygames also announce that they will be distributing all the R Talsorian Cyberpunk products such as **Hardwired** and **Near Orbit**. Talking of which, the latest scenario is called **Alice Through The Mirror Shades**, and is a team-up with West End Games' **Paranoia**, set in the post-computer campaign world of the **Crash Course Manual**, and apparently the first of the **Vulture Warriors** of Dimension X series. So now you know! More on West End a little later.



Much ado . . .

'A new board game for 1990' enthuses the press release. The game in question is **Commotion**. Here's how this new game works: players pick a card which contains a word. From this word, they must give a clue. Other players must then try to guess what the word is from this clue. If you are right you get a point. If you are wrong you get nowt. Yours for only seventeen quid, squire.

Pizza war

Usuthu!, as if you didn't know, was the battle cry of the Zulu nation. It also happens to be the name of the new game from Valhalla, which, as if you didn't know, was where the Vikings hoped to spend their afterlife. To confuse matters even further, the game arrives in a pizza box. To the best of our knowledge, neither the Vikings nor the Zulus showed much of an appetite for Italian food of any kind, though we understand that the Zulus expressed a fondness for pepperoni (*the game, what about the game?*). Ah yes, the game is a tactical level simulation of the battle of Porkes Drift in 1879. One player plays the colonialist swine, and the other plays the Zulu nation, or as the rule book puts it, here is a chance for your warriors to 'wash their spears' (and eat pizza?). Price £8.95 from Valhalla Games (sorry, no home deliveries).

The stars and you

January (Capricorn) sees the release of a new **Star Wars** miniatures set which features the Rancor – a monster living in a squat beneath Jabba's Palace, in glorious 25mm.

In February West End are to release a new adventure for **Star Wars** entitled **Black Ice**. The title refers to a cargo transport

vessel which is five times larger than a Star Destroyer. This means it's pretty big.

Those of you who loved **Chainsaw Warrior** (Scorpio) will be thrilled to hear that Stephen Hand, who designed that game, is the man responsible for **Escape From Death Star** a new boardgame in which the heroes start off in the dreaded Brixton detention block. The object is to get them to the *Millennium Falcon* before the Tories bring back hanging.

If you're a spotty type who can't find opponents, there's no need to worry; West End are to release a new **Star Wars** solitaire adventure in March entitled *Scoundrel's Luck*. Lucky you gets to play the part of Han Solo (Gemini) whose mission it is to rescue the Princess Leia Lovitch.

Still with West End (*how much are they paying you? – Ed*), due for release shortly is a new **Paranoia** adventure entitled *Gamma-Lot*. This concerns the story of a randy lizard (Taurus) who tries to get his 'simplexdom' back. The paranoid will understand.

Fresh air

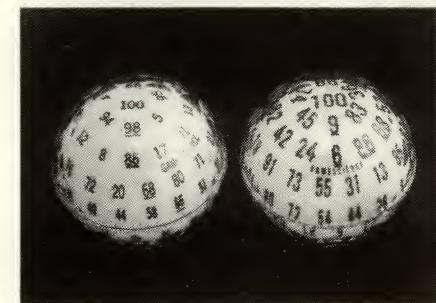
Fans of GDW's **Air Superiority** may be interested to know that the game's designer, J D Webster, produces a broadsheet magazine called *Air Power* which contains updates, stats, and scenarios for the game. A one year subscription (6 issues) costs \$12 from: Air Power Publications, PO Box 2582, LaGrange, GA 30241, USA.

Sweatshop

Games Workshop's best seller **Space Hulk** now has a new expansion kit to accompany it. **Death Wing** features new scenarios and campaign rules, plus new tiles and counters. Price £12.99.

Ton up

For those role-players who want to create a truly rounded character, Zocchi Distributors of Mississippi have produced a new version of their hundred sided golf ball, whoops, I mean die. Available in the UK from specialist games shops.



Grizzly

Following the success of the *Lone Wolf and Cub* comic, sorry, graphic novel, a new boardgame based on the series has been published by Mayfair Games. Not surprisingly this is entitled **Lone Wolf and Cub**. The game can be played either solitaire, or by two players. Price around £21.95.

The folks on the hill

Out now priced £28.55 is **Fifth Fleet**, the latest in the series of Joe Balkoski games for Victory. From Avalon Hill comes **Napoleons Battles**, a new set of miniature rules priced £20.45. Coming soon, the hitherto unapproached subject of wrestling gets tackled in a new multi-player card game **Wrasslin'**, which 'retains the strategy of the sort that serious **Up Front** players crave'. Perhaps they mean the grunts.

Derek Carver's **New World** should be out soon, as should **Republic of Rome**, a new multi-player game of Roman Senatorial politics. Noted designer Richard Berg chips in with **Sea Hawks**, another multi-player game, this time about pirates. Gridiron fans may care to note that the 3rd edition of **Bowl Bound** is now out, though only available in the UK by special order. Definitely available in the UK are the teams for **Paydirt**, price £9.85 by themselves, or £16.45 with the game.

Feverish

Cup Fever is the new yacht racing game from New Zealand which is based on the Americas Cup. The game sold very well in its native country and will be launched (sorry) in the UK at the Earls Court Toy Fair. It will be generally available from January 28th.

REVIEWS

W A R | G A M E S

• **EUROPE AFLAME**DESIGNED BY
DAVID 'ZEB' COOKPUBLISHED BY
TSR

PRICE £19.95

Whatever *Europe Aflame* is like as a game, TSR deserves credit for producing what is the first box art for a Second World War game that doesn't feature Hitler, SS men or even German Panzergrenadiers. In fact, the only German tank visible on the box (and on the rules book) is a knocked out Panzer IV. Good to see a game that doesn't look like it's celebrating the glories of the Thousand Year Reich ...

The game itself looks at first more like a cross between *Axis & Allies* and *Tritac-*

tics than a serious wargame (not that I'm knocking either game – both are very good at the right time, but not exactly, how shall we say, accurate simulations).

The pieces – counters just isn't the right word – are roughly half inch by one inch, with national insignia on one half (Polish eagle, German cross, British roundels, hammer and sickle and American star) and unit type and strength on the other. You fold them in half and stick them in a plastic holder. The Axis player sits one side of the board, and the Allied commander the other: each arranges his forces with the strength side facing him and the national insignia facing his opponent.

The board itself covers Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Movement is by areas, with each type of unit – infantry, panzers, motorised infantry, all armies and so on – able to move a certain number of areas. As is usual with area movement games, the size of each area reflects the difficulty or lack of it in moving through the real terrain it covers.

Combat is simple: you roll a 10 sided die for each unit attacking, and, if you roll

equal to or less than that unit's combat strength, you hit the enemy and cause one point of damage. A roll of 1 can have additional effects, such as forcing the enemy to retreat.

Various types of unit have special combat abilities: panzers can attack again, driving deep into enemy territory, while Soviet shock armies inflict two points of damage for each hit. Players can also build a limited number of army groups, which can hold up to four ordinary armies.

In addition to the unit counters, there are various markers representing garrisons, paratroops, submarine wolfpacks and partisans. To build all these, you need resource points: various places on the map produce these, so obviously you have to keep an eye on where the most productive areas are and try to capture them or hold on to them.

Don't be fooled by the units on bases and the naïveté of the map: *Europe Aflame* is surprisingly complex. It has rules to cover most of the major eventualities of the war, and they seem to work pretty well. Admittedly, the combat system is a bit 'bang bang, you're dead', but it works well enough (and I've seen a number of games wrecked by an over complex combat results table).

Having played through a couple of times, I had a look at the other Second World War strategic games on my shelves. *World in Flames* it ain't, but then I'm still struggling with the rule book for that one (fourth edition – can anyone tell me where the 1936-1947 campaign game is?). And if you're used to playing *Third Reich*, then you will probably turn up your nose at it. But it's certainly better than *Axis & Allies*, in some ways more realistic than *Hitler's War*, and a hell of a lot shorter than *War in Europe*.

Europe Aflame is a good introductory level wargame which can also keep more advanced players busy for a while. Don't expect pin-point accuracy, just sit back and enjoy it.

Martin Croft



USUTHU!

DESIGNED BY
ANDY SHEPPECK & ANTHONY
CHESNEY

PUBLISHED BY
VALHALLA GAMES

PRICE £10

Valhalla stuck to some older concepts. If you do not like them then you can at least admire the system which has some elegant sub-mechanisms.

The tactical element of the game is very strong. The hospital and commissariat stores stand out as strongpoints with the mealie sack perimeter forming the rest of the line. The scale is such that the smaller outlying buildings are all represented (ovens, officers lavatory etc). The Zulus' movement off-board usually permits them to be within two turns of the nearest British unit.

Usuthu! covers the battle of Rorke's Drift. The game comes in a box (described by Brian Walker in a memorable phrase as 'a pizza box') with a black and white illustration of what are Zulus (if you look at them long enough). There is a short rule book full of spelling errors. The counters are too small, have to be pasted and cut and, just to help, have no proper guidelines. The map is not too bad showing the area around the mission station but using rather a strong hex grid and not always tieing neatly to the Terrain Effects Chart (although a squint at the real thing in any book on the period helps out). Finally there is an off-board movement chart that does not agree with the map.

There are so many mistakes that one experiences that terrible fear of a reviewer about to kick the living daylights out of an amateur game because it has fouled up. **Usuthu!** and Valhalla Games are going to pay a heavy price for these failures in artwork and presentation but thank goodness once you have cut through the presentation there is a solid game underneath.

STORM OVER AFRICA

Usuthu! is a mechanistic, loadsadice, traditional slugfest. It has some neat ideas but it is still quite a lot of work with not a great premium on skill. But, to balance this, it has the inherent excitement of its topic and the effective way the game fits together. The Brits really do start to crumble, you have to pull back if the thin red line is to hold, but always the Zulus take more and more frightful losses. Whatever can be said about the game in **Usuthu!** there is an obvious winner and an obvious loser. Now had I designed **Usuthu!** I would have used a **Storm Over Arnhem** system, but as I have not done I shall restrict my comments to observing that much of what the game does is in excess of what it needs to do. The same effect could be achieved more quickly and more easily. If you like slugfests you are going to be glad that

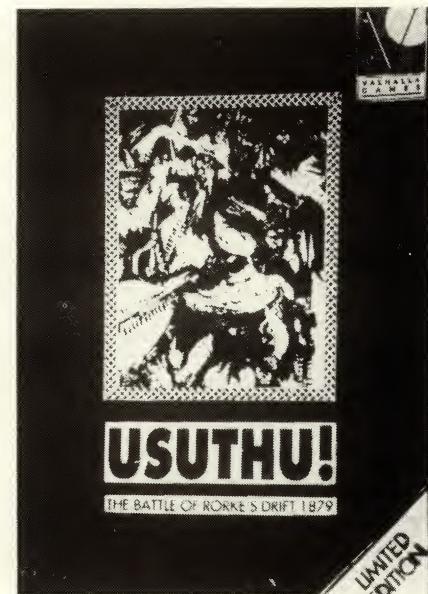
The British come in interchangeable units of men (so you get all 139 men who were present at the real battle). There are even the wounded and bed-ridden who defended the hospital and four leaders. The Zulus stonk around in large two hex counters. They amass hits and are removed when the hits reach a key level (which differs depending on the impi and may reflect not only men lost but some element of morale). The British counters show either a number of rifles or a cutlass (which appears to be an officer) in white on red and the Zulus are therefore red on white (because this is two colour printing). This gives the odd effect of hordes of . . . er . . . white Zulus breaking on the red line. The lads would have been better off with some xeroxed silhouettes of British troops and the Zulu impis with the relevant shield design.

ZULU NATION

The game sequence is Zulu Off Board Movement: Zulu Entry Phase: British Fire: Zulu Movement: Zulu Melee: British Command: British Movement: British Melee: and Zulu Fatigue.

The Zulu move is 16 (to a British move of 6) but the Zulu pays for both hexes entered by his two hex units. At first this is a little alien but soon moves along well. The Brits have an advantage in that leaders can summon units from up to five hexes away and then move them. This heightens the importance of officers and NCOs who gather up the reinforcements and send them in to bolster up the sagging line.

British fire does not involve any ranged factors unless your target is at 1-2 hexes range. This makes things easier for the gamer who has to manage the fire, and given the range makes a lot of sense. There are LOS rules however. The Brits fire on the basis of numbers of rifles and hit about a third of the time. If led by an officer they may volley fire and this is much more effective both in killing Zulus



and in stopping them. All British units must be properly faced but this causes few problems and only affects fire, not movement or melee.

Zulu melee involves a simple dice throw per unit and modifications for terrain giving losses in terms of British men or in 'pressure points'. The Zulu units have a single strength value and only one column on the Combat Table is needed. Effectively heavy British losses will only occur if the Zulus can push the Brits away from the walls or other defensive terrain and it is here that pressure points are so important.

Star Ratings

First class game. Hall of Fame material

A good game, even if the subject doesn't appeal to you

Competent but nothing special

**

Not recommended unless you're especially interested in the subject



A true turkey

Pressure points are a bit fiddly in execution but are a clever concept. The number of pressure points on a stack of British troops is increased by each dead Brit, each round of melee, each pressure point increase combat result and by defending the South wall of the Hospital. When the pressure points get to 5 or greater there is a one third chance that the Brits will have to fall back one hex (and that can let the Zulus over the mealie sacks). To ease the pressure the Brits can send in officers and reinforcements, or even a bayonet charge (great stuff!). A bit of a rest also helps. In effect this important feature of the game is almost completely morale-driven, so *Usuthu!* is not completely traditional. One gets a real feel for the thing with units being rushed here and there to try to hold until one has to abandon one section of the line and retreat on the next line (if there is a next line). The pressure point concept is spot on.

British melee is very like fire combat and adds further losses to the Zulu totals. Losses are then removed in terms of permanently lost sub-units. The game does not assume the Zulus are an infinite wave

(although the Brits may feel that they are near that). In addition after a number of rounds of combat most Zulu units will either be dead, or withdrawn as fatigued. Although there are three impis only two may be on the map at one time so that there is a definite limit to the pressure the Zulus can sustain before they retire to regroup and another impi enters. This seems an effective and accurate representation of the whole thing.

The game has 17 turns of daylight and 5 of night. The time element is obviously not directly proportional with the very tactical nature of the combat not being allowed to require too much combat in total. It felt reasonable.

The single scenario involves clearing the Drift for the Zulus, without coping 500 casualties. There are victory points for those who like to score things tightly. (No method of distributing Victoria Crosses though).

I do not know what alternative strategies are possible – should one mass in one area and roll them back with fire-power, or

should one retain as much room for retreat as possible? Frankly the sheer work is too much for me to find out, but I am a lazy old fart and many of you will try the matter out. *Usuthu!* is a reasonable blend of atmosphere and accuracy, but it is not a quick game. That said it is also not a thoughtless giant game where you work like fury to generate nothing very interesting. Messrs Sheppeck and Chesney can feel pleased with the game although next time a bit more thought on the artwork is needed (but then it always is, if we could redo *The King's War* again it would look very different without a single change to the rules). I hope you will not be put off by appearance or the work of assembling the counters, it is worth the effort.

Charles H Vasey

Usuthu! is available at £10 a copy from Valhalla Games, 19 Luke Road, Droylesden, Manchester, M35 7FE.

This review will be appearing shortly in Charles's own magazine, Perfidious Albion.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

SECOND EDITION

DESIGNED BY
FRANK CHADWICK

PUBLISHED BY
GDW

PRICE £17.95

*****^{1/2}

covers all the principal campaign areas of the American Civil War from the east to the Mississippi. Terrain is divided into boxes linked by road, rail or river routes. The playing pieces represent armies and are categorised as militia, veteran or crack troops. The two sides start the game with militia but get to promote or improve their troops as the campaign continues.

A HOUSE REVISITED

The sequence of play is simple. When it is a player's turn, they roll a die to get the number of marches allowed. A stack of pieces costs one march to move and no stack may be marched more than twice. Movement is conducted along the routes between boxes and, in general, an infantry march will move a piece only one box (although rail and river travel may give some bonuses) and a cavalry march may move two. If opposing forces occupy the same box the players conduct a battle by lining up their pieces and firing at each other. If a piece rolls a die equal to or less than its combat values (2 for militia infantry, 3 for veteran and crack) then an enemy piece takes a step loss (all pieces have two steps), and both sides keep firing until either one side is dead or has run away. Special rules allow for things such as naval invasions and supply, and both players hammer away at each other until either Washington is captured by the Confederates or a number of key cities fall into Union hands. Simple, huh?

Few games these days attain the title of 'classic'; fewer still get revised and updated to make them better or more enjoyable, but with *A House Divided* this is precisely the case. The original game was released in 1981 as a simple strategic simulation of the American Civil War with an approach that was not so much a broad brush as a paint roller. However it was simple, fast, fun to play and remarkably true to its source. Hailed as a classic, it has proved popular for club and tournament play and to this day is regarded well in the hobby. Now GDW have produced a second edition which has refined an excellent game yet further.

For those unfamiliar with even the original, let me describe the game. The map

Overall, the original game was fun and furious, and despite the daunting 40 game turn length could be played to conclusion in a single, admittedly fairly long, gaming session. The only complaint that could be levelled at it was that the game was *too simple* and that the resulting lack of chrome meant the game lacked sparkle. Well, with the new edition GDW have made up for the lack of chrome in a welter of optional and extra rules.

The Basic game has not changed at all, although the new layout has expanded the rules booklet from its original four pages to 16. However the Advanced rules, which occupied a double-sided sheet in the original edition, have now expanded to a separate eight page booklet with charts and tables. The main change in the Advanced rules is in the introduction of command rules which change the way battles are fought. Battles are now divided into days which are themselves subdivided into battle rounds. A die roll on the Command Table determines how many pieces may attack on a given day, although more units can be brought into the fighting as the battle drags on. Predictably, the Confederates come out better on the Command Table than the Union, although the North begins to outstrip the South in the latter stages of the war. Optional rules also allow for three leader counters: R E Lee, 'Unconditional Surrender' Grant, and Sherman, who give extra command and firing bonuses to



battle. Other optional rules allow for battlefield desertion, foreign intervention, the intervention of the border states and northern draft riots. Since all these advanced rules are optional, players can pick and choose what they want without ruining the simplicity of the Basic game.

A HOUSE RENOVATED

The physical production is excellent. The game board now comes as a sturdy four piece jigsaw and the counters are back printed on heavy cardstock. A game turn chart is provided, as is a chart for tournament play – a sign that GDW are doing their utmost to encourage the hobby.

My review copy is from an early printing and so did not contain an errata slip. As a result the counter sheet contains a couple of errors: namely that the two Union leader counters are poorly registered and are not printed front and back. I spoke to Marc Miller at GDW who confirmed this error, but also stated that all current shipments of the game have been rectified and that if a player has a duff counter sheet they should write to GDW who will have a set of replacement leader counters sent to them free. For the record, the Grant counter should read '1/Grant/Feb 1862' on the front and '2/Grant/June 1863' on the back; while the Sherman counter is '1/Sherman/May 1862' on the front and '2/Sherman/Aug 1863' on the back.

My editor wanted me to deduct a star for this production error, but I couldn't bring myself to (*That's OK, I did it for you – Ed*). In essence, *A House Divided* remains as fresh and fun a game as it was all those years ago. The abundance of

new chrome perks the game up, especially the leader rules which add personality, and existing owners of the game might well consider buying a copy of this edition. For those who enjoy the Civil War in all its aspects (the meat grind of the east or the broad sweeps of the west) and even for those who know little about the war or who are novices to wargaming, there is something for everyone in this game and I can wholeheartedly recommend it.

Lee Brimmicombe-Wood

TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD EXPANSION KIT

Price £4.95

Those of you who have enjoyed the recent release from The Avalon Hill Game Company, *Turning Point: Stalingrad*, will want to consider picking up the extra counter sheet that comprises this expansion kit. The rules refer to this at Rule 2, and to various other changes necessary to prolong the game beyond October 3rd (where it currently ends).

Details of the arrival and withdrawal of units are already provided in the cards provided in *Turning Point: Stalingrad*. The counter sheet includes further disorganisation markers, reduced daylight counters, random number chits (instead of dice), and extra German and Russian combat counters.

Its potential to double the length of the game will make it popular with those who have the time, space and inclination to fight this one to the finish. Those of you who play on the dining room table are not going to find it much use.

Charles Vasey

Balboa Game Company

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REVIEWS

ROLE | GAMES

**GURPS
RIVERWORLD**DESIGNED BY
JOE M CAPARULAPUBLISHED BY
STEVE JACKSON

PRICE £10.99

There seems to be a temptation among fans of games and science fiction to describe anything they like as a classic, regardless of its merit. The author of **GURPS Riverworld**, Joe M Caparula, does this in his first sentence when referring to Philip José Farmer's *Riverworld* novels. This is best translated to mean that Riverworld is an interesting idea but requires a larger than usual helping of suspension of disbelief. Such enthusiasm, however, can almost be forgiven because Riverworld is an interesting place for role-playing adventures.

INTERESTING HUMANS

Riverworld is a good choice for a **GURPS** supplement because of the challenges its background presents. Virtually all encounters will be with humans, many of whom have led interesting lives. It therefore places a strong emphasis on playing roles rather than treating it as an extension of **GURPS Hack and Slay**.

The catch about Riverworld is that it would spoil the novelty of adventuring there if players who were new to it knew anything about the background. Revealing any of this background would certainly destroy the point of the single initial adventure that comes in **GURPS Riverworld**. Just wait to see which reviews in which magazines do precisely this!

The only person who should read the *Riverworld* books before playing is the referee. Ironically, a referee who does this will not really need **GURPS Riverworld**

except as a more accessible reference source than the books because it is essentially easy to understand and play.

BLACK AND WHITE

Riverworld requires only a colourless system because few special effects are required and this makes **GURPS** ideal. **GURPS**'s disadvantage, however, is that it doesn't make the special characters from the background heroic enough, a fault that is probably more noticeable in the fantasy combat system in which seemingly high levels of skill translate to only a mundane level of success.

The world's mixed technological base requires primitive and advanced societies to be catered for, again something that suits the breadth of **GURPS** whose bland approach is right for a broad spectrum of adventure without providing any one element with character.

All the information that is essential for referees seems to be there, although finding it is sometimes awkward as bits of it have been split off into the side bars which accompany the main text. This is common practice, but in this supplement information that would ordinarily be printed with other relevant information has been separated.

The details of some non-player characters, for example, are in side bars away from the main section on such characters. Despite cross referencing and an index this means there is still too much page-flipping to find information.

The text suffers from the usual number of hanging, unfinished

sentences which seems to typify desktop published work, reflecting poorly on the proofreaders and being annoying for the buyer.

One addition which would have been useful in the supplement is more information and examples of communities in Riverworld to help new referees adapt quickly to the game. The books provide ideas, but it seems lazy not to offer more than the books when it would have been easy to do. Caparula seems more intent on working himself into the supplement, Farmer style, than catering for referees.

Steve Jackson Games seems to be finding more and more niches to exploit for its **GURPS** system. Each time a new supplement comes out it seems important to ask who will buy the product. Riverworld's appeal is limited and despite the supplement's general level of excellence **GURPS Riverworld** will probably only do as well as Chaosium's **Ringworld** role-playing game did in the UK.

Ian Marsh



DAWN OF THE EMPERORS

THYATIS AND APHATIA

D&D GAZETTEER

DESIGNED BY
AARON ALLSTON

PUBLISHED BY
TSR

PRICE £11.95

****½

The Known World is dominated by the two vast empires of Thyatis and Alphatia. Most of the other countries in the Gazetteer series have been invaded by one or both, and only continue to exist by playing off these ancient rivals against each other. The area of the two empires is ten times all the other Gazetteers put together, so it is not surprising they get an extra large supplement.

Two 32 page booklets give slightly biased player information on each of the empires. The 128 page Dungeon Master's Sourcebook is more accurate, and has extra detail about history, geography, important characters and monsters, with guidelines on campaigning in each empire. It also has several short modules,

and many interesting scenario ideas. Two large double-sided full colour maps cover the whole of both empires, and detail some important features of each. The maps suffer from rigidly forcing everything to fit the hex grid, which suits a boardgame more than a rolegame.

Thyatis consists of a peninsula and several islands to the south of the Known World. In Thyatis, power is gained by fighting prowess and treachery. Thyatians are not quite Klingons, however, as they are happy to extend the benefits of Thyatian citizenship to inhabitants of conquered countries, and often adopt foreign dress and customs.

Alphatia has several large islands to the East. Their social system is simple: people who can use magic (magic users, clerics and elves) are aristocracy, the rest are commoners. This huge country is ruled by a Council of 1000 36th level Wizards. Fortunately (for everyone else) they usually work at cross purposes.

The additional rules for Alphatians include new spells for making magic items, especially flying ships and castles. The Thyatians counter this with the Retebius Air Fleet, which tames and rides flying

monsters. There are two new character classes: foresters are humans who can fight and use magic like elves, and rakes are lawful thieves. Anyone can learn general skills, which allow characters to use skills such as military tactics or shipwright, regardless of their character class.

The optional rules for combat include a system where armour absorbs damage rather than making the wearer harder to hit. Of course, this is the way every other game has done it for ten years, but it is nice to see D&D catching up at last.

I have a few quibbles with the new rules. There is no reason to use any kind of shield other than the tower shield, which gives +4 to Armour Class. In the magic section, a +5 sword only costs five times as much to make as a +1 sword. I think it should be far more expensive.

I was pleasantly surprised by this campaign pack. Maybe TSR do not subject D&D products to the rigid straitjacket they impose on AD&D. However, AD&D players do not need to be left out, as there is a section on converting everything to AD&D2.

Steve G Jones

Star Ratings

First class game. Hall of Fame material

A good game, even if the subject doesn't appeal to you

Competent but nothing special

**

Not recommended unless you're especially interested in the subject



A true turkey

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CREATURE CRUCIBLE: TALL TALES OF THE WEE FOLK

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS SUPPLEMENT

DESIGNED BY
JOHN NEPHEW

PUBLISHED BY
TSR

PRICE £6.50

Creature Crucible, from its fold-out screen (containing useful charts and tables as well as a colour map) to its two environmentally-friendly booklets, is an invaluable accessory for any D&D or

AD&D referee who prefers his monsters to have personalities as well as stats. It is a special accessory designed to assist the referee with encounters with woodland creatures of most kinds, providing background notes on their habits, nature, environment, attitude and personalities as well as rules to assist the referee with managing them as player characters. All this information, plus information on their habitat, magic, skills and equipment, are contained within the 64 page DM's Booklet.

The 'Adventures' booklet, meanwhile, offers some advice on conducting woodland-based encounters and adventures, and also provides an adaptation to AD&D2 (which is little more than a glossary). Seven sample adventures are provided, for parties of Basic level to those of Masters level and higher (though all are adaptable). Briefly, the adventures are A Night Out In The Forest, a short encounter with a magical dance; The Hanging Hideout, a straightforward battle in an unusual setting; Sith Bruaich, the tale of

a psychotic Brownie (yes, really!); A Quiet Day Spent Fishing, a pointless encounter with talking fish and a sea monster; Cattle of the March, a peculiar tale of missing cows stolen by fairies; A Blight On The Forest, a juxtaposed tale of a miscreant treant. The last tale, The Lost Seneschal, is much longer and more playable, although it boils down to a set of tasks set by woodland creatures to test the worthiness of the characters before handing over a stolen tax-collector.

As a package, *Creature Crucible* looks and feels like one of the excellent Gazetteer series, although it is more light-hearted and user-friendly. Some of its reference material is fascinating, drawing on Welsh, Irish and Shakespearian legend for inspiration (it has a comprehensive glossary and bibliography). All in all it is a valuable, if a little specialised, supplement.

Dave Hughes

MERCURIAL

SHADOWRUN SCENARIO

DESIGNED BY
PAUL HUME

PUBLISHED BY
FASA

PRICE £5.50

Mercurial is the first big adventure supplement for FASA's hybrid fantasy/cyberpunk rolegame, *Shadowrun*. 80 pages long and lavishly illustrated, it includes plenty of handouts and even a concert poster (though only in black and white) to add atmosphere. The production and layout is neat, with each section of the adventure containing 'debugging' instructions for getting players back on track if they wander off course.

Maria Mercurial is the name of a chrome-wired megastar rock singer locked in a contract dispute with her agent. However, Mr Agent appears to be a nasty piece of slime: the sort of guy who employs razormen to retain his percentage. Now, some Suit named Foley has entered, stage right, and is offering 5K a head to any team prepared to protect Maria's pretty little butt for a week. What he hasn't mentioned,

however, is the Yakuza strike team and the Aztec corporate street army who are both gunning for the little lady, and their connection with an eco-disaster of titanic proportions. You can bet your boot razors that any 'runner jacked into this biz will either be cashing some serious NuYen or cashing in his cyberchips . . . real fast!

On the surface, Mr Hume's adventure is fairly straightforward and unchallenging. Much of it is little more than a linear shoot-em-up and there are few really interesting non player characters to hold the interest. However, **Mercurial** has enough pizzazz and ideas to make it rattle along at a furious pace. There's a bit of everything for everyone in this adventure

and it's loud and noisy enough to keep a largish group of players happy for a couple of sessions. Also, though the scenario has few lead-ins to subplots, there are enough ideas in the background notes to keep an inventive referee occupied for a while. My only complaint is the intrusive fantasy element in a straight thriller plot confirming that FASA have yet to get the cyberpunk/fantasy blend right. However, for a referee who is not afraid to handle plenty of action and turn up the style this is a tight, compact little scenario to throw (grenade-like) at his or her group. Handle with care.

Lee Brimmicombe-Wood



SPELLJAMMER

AD&D SUPPLEMENT

DESIGNED BY
JEFF GRUBB

PUBLISHED BY
TSR

PRICE £12.95

**

About a year ago I heard a rumour that Steve Jackson Games were working on a GURPS sourcebook satirising Space: 1889 which at the time was very new. The sourcebook was to be called 'Space 1492' and began with the idea that at the end of the fifteenth century Columbus set sail from Spain towards America, missed it completely and fell off the edge of the world.

It seems as though TSR heard the same rumour and decided to beat SJG to the punch – hence **Spelljammer**. There are three problems with this. Firstly, **Spelljammer** is very obviously a rushed production job. Secondly, SJG could perhaps have got away with 'Space 1492' as a satire if they'd attacked it in a humorous, snappy way, but TSR, who have a reputation to uphold, take it as a straight concept. And finally the idea of medieval characters in space doesn't have a lot of meat on its bones in the first place.

Spelljammer is subtitled 'AD&D Adventures in Outer Space'. This is something of a misnomer since the universe it describes is based loosely on outdated ideas of the universe such as Phlogiston, crystal spheres and planets on the backs of elephants. These are all glued together by Jeff Grubb's reality-warping rules which attempt to make Wildspace (which is inside the crystal spheres) and the Phlogiston (which is outside) a strange place to be. They succeed but at the same time make no logical sense: if one takes the gravity rules at face value then objects near a planet fall away from it. Odd rules were something that spoiled an earlier Jeff Grubb book: **Manual of the Planes**, and it is sad to see them recurring here.

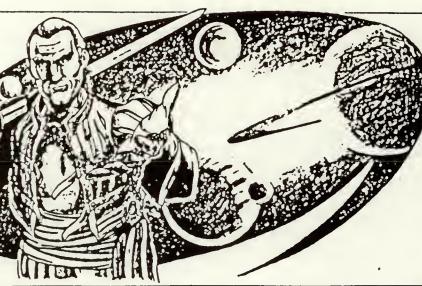
Once one is away from the reality restructuring, most of the two books in the **Spelljammer** package are concerned with either modifying the AD&D2 rules or adding to them. Over twenty-four pages are set aside for new monsters and spells; an-

other ten pages describe the effects of existing spells and modified combat rules for space take up another twenty.

It is here that **Spelljammer** really falls apart. For example, an early rule change in the Concordance of Arcane Space says that missile weapons have an infinite range in space and gives an example of a bow being shot 2000 yards. Forty pages later we are told bows have a maximum range of 500 yards, and the furthest any weapon can fire is 3000 yards. Moreover, missiles move so slowly in ship-to-ship combat that a space vessel piloted by, say, a 10th level mage can move five times as fast. The cumulative effect of these inconsistencies is to make space combat unplayable.

What background there is in **Spelljammer** is imaginative and consistent, but unfortunately there is little of it. The major descriptions, which this set needed to bring it alive, are obviously being saved for subsequent supplements. As a result the Rock of Bral, despite a beautiful map, gets three pages of description, and the Spelljammer itself, a kind of celestial Marie Celeste, gets one page which says that almost nothing is known about it. One is left with the final impression that adventuring in space is a lot like adventuring on the high seas, but with a few new monsters and some trick gravity rules.

As far as the components go, **Spelljammer** scores highly, with several large full-



colour maps, card counters and ship plans and two 96-page books profusely illustrated. Unfortunately the books lack an index and the layout is a little chaotic. The sidebars are particularly disorganised and a number of sections do not tie up properly, leading to disarray and confusion.

The whole project seems to have been the victim of too little time and too many editors: anything that can describe crystal spheres as 'having a radius at least twice as big as the orbital radius of the outermost celestial body in the system' on one page and 'planet-sized' on the next page has not been proof-read by someone who had their mind on the subject.

Spelljammer may score well physically but fails mentally, and most of the impressive physical components are tied too closely to the new rules to have any other use. Scavenging AD&D players who enjoy stripping tasty ideas from the carcasses of dying games may find it of interest, but I cannot recommend it to anyone else.

James Wallis

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GHOSTBUSTERS INTERNATIONAL

DESIGNED BY
AARON ALLSTON & DOUG
KAUFMAN

PUBLISHED BY
WEST END

PRICE £14.99

What do you do with one of the truly great movie-based games when the movie sequel comes out? Simple. You drag in a bunch of people who had nothing to do with the original game and let them make a pig's ear of things.

Well, it's not quite that bad, but it's close. The original *Ghostbusters* game was a classic, and I would certainly have given it five stars if I'd been reviewing for GI when it came out. It had a wonderfully simple system which stressed fun and role-playing over number crunching. It had great layout, with lines from the movie (and lines which *might* have made it into the movie) used effectively to entertain and inform. All this and cute little equipment cards too!

IS THIS TRUE?

The new version's 'Design and Development' is credited to Mssrs Allston and Kaufman, but anxious punters should be reassured that much of the original game (by Sandy Peterson and Lynn Willis with Greg Stafford) is still there. What the new guys have done is add a lot of pointless chrome on to the system. So now we have something called a UHM (Universal How

Much) system, in which you subtract the score you rolled from what you had to roll, in order to find out how well you did. Using this cunning mechanism, all kinds of extra stuff you never realised you needed can be bolted on, like a damage system.

The Ghost Die mechanism, whereby one of the dice rolled must always be the Ghost Die, on which the one is replaced by Ghost – the sign that some unforeseen 'accident' has taken place – is still there, but sits uneasily with a UHM system which has the same sort of result. There's also an encumbrance system, in which you work out how many 'hands' worth of equipment you're carrying.

Oh, I haven't mentioned the layout of the new game either, have I. It's dull. It's dull dull dull. Gone is the space, gone are the neat little cameos of Venkman, Spengler and the others, gone are the photos. All these enlivened the old Training Manual (Player's Book), and punctuated the Operations Manual (Referee's Book) sparsely but effectively. The new version is a single 138-page volume, which looks much like those tedious-looking computer manuals produced on desktop publishing equipment by jerks like me. The neat little quotes which winked coyly at you from the margins are now in italics at the start of sections, where they just look out of place.

YES, THIS MAN HAS NO DICK

But what's *in* it? Well, *Ghostbusters International* is certainly bigger than *Ghostbusters*. It has a big equipment list (luckily the all-important Beach Kit is still there), expanded sections on Ghostology and Weird Science, and a new section on the Supernatural, in which player character sorcerers are permitted. There



are also new sections on designing adventures and campaigns, stressing the cinematic connections and featuring plenty of tips on ladling atmosphere all over your players. Before the final collection of scenarios and cameos is a roster of non player characters, both from the film and original. Most of these are standard fare, though for some reason I quite liked the (rather obvious) Count Suave, the undead casanova.

There are two scenarios provided in the book. The first, 'House Pests' is an introductory adventure in which our intrepid heroes must deal with a standard haunting. But of course there's a wrinkle, in the shape of a certain Dr Harlan Loone, which ensures that it's not *that* standard. The second adventure, 'Dead Guys On Parade', is a zombie story which has precious few laughs all-in-all. It does avoid the excesses of some *Ghostbusters* adventure ideas, but doesn't replace them with anything great. Finally, the cameos were one of the best features of the original game, and luckily some have been retained, along with new fare.

All in all, *Ghostbusters GBI* is still a good game. However, it's now trying to be a 'proper' game, with encumbrance rules and the like, and this sits uneasily with the wacky elements. The original was billed with admirable irony as a 'Frightfully Cheerful' role-playing game. *GBI* is the far more prosaic 'Humorous Horror' role-playing game. It sadly misses the light touch of Greg Costikyan, who did editing on the first edition, and I can't help feeling that West End would have ended up with a better game and saved themselves time and money by just reprinting the original with some new, movie-related material.



Paul Mason

TROLL GODS

DESIGNED BY
CHAOSIUM

PUBLISHED BY
AVALON HILL

PRICE £16.45

bines three sets of research: one approximately one thousand years old, one almost four hundred years old and the third quite recent.

Comparing the attitudes of the different times and authors to trolls makes fascinating reading, especially the third, which not only was 'liberated' from an Irripi Ontor (the Lunar god of knowledge) source (and consequently rants unashamedly about the nasty heathen gods that player characters tend to follow) but also concentrates on the area of Skyfall Lake. The whole is interspersed with commentary from Minaryth Purple himself – a subtext which contains a coded message to his employer!

TROLL FACTS

The box contains a large, utterly useless map of Glorantha (showing only mountains and primary troll regions!), the Troll Cults book and 'Minaryth Purple's Troll Facts No 3'.

The latter is a 28 sided pamphlet taking the form of a report from Minaryth Purple (a priest of the knowledge god Lankhor Mhy) to his current employer Lord Harshax (a member of the Sartar nobility) on troll cults and magic. The report com-

The Troll Cults book is the meat of the pack – an 88 page monster giving full write-ups of 15 darkness gods. Eight of these, to my knowledge, have not been published before (not even for *RuneQuest 2*) and purchasers will be especially interested in Annilla and Arkat. Also included are notes on 16 'Spirits of Darkness', though some (notably Asrelia, Dehore and Lodril) would certainly be classed as gods by humans. The text does point out though that the Uz consider gods (even Kyger Litor, the Mother of Trolls) just to

be big spirits anyway, so this is not too surprising.

If your *RuneQuest* campaign takes place in Glorantha, this is another coup for Chaosium – I'm afraid you just can't live without this one!

Philip A Murphy



BATMAN SOURCEBOOK

DC HEROES SUPPLEMENT

DESIGNED BY
MIKE STACKPOLE

PUBLISHED BY
MAYFAIR GAMES

PRICE £7.25

It is fitting that this should be the first supplement for the second edition of *DC Heroes*, this being, of course, the Caped Crusader's 50th anniversary year. My initial thoughts were that little has been changed in this second edition of the product, except the layout, but appearances can be deceptive. Certainly the look of the

book has been altered, and this is a mixed blessing; for while the art is used to far better effect, all titles are presented in a mixture of upper and lower case letters, which I found messy. Still, the content is the important thing, so how does that score? Well, its strength lies in the fact that this is no longer simply a collection of non player characters and maps. Certainly The Joker, Mr Freeze, Alfred Pennyworth and the others are still here (and presented in a much expanded form that makes the details a delight to read), as are the maps of the Batcave, Wayne Manor and the Wayne Foundation Building. But accompanying these sections are several well researched essays on The Batman, his history and his methods. These are not just lists of dry facts for comic trivia fans; they cover topics ranging from The Batman's sanity to his relationships with other superheroes, and are presented with an eye towards the facts being integrated within a gaming session. One of the most elegant of these articles details the changes in style that the character has

undergone over the last half century, and provides the referee with background and optional rules to allow him to set a campaign in any of these periods – a nice touch indeed. The book is rounded off with a short one-on-one adventure, which pits The Batman against one of his oldest foes. While the scenario is nothing spectacular, it should prove entertaining enough.

This is a high quality product, which should satisfy the needs of most Batman fans who are looking for gaming details. What faults there are, are few and generally minor. I would have preferred to see details of more of The Batman's newer foes such as Ratcatcher and The Fear, but most people will probably be more than happy with the selection of villains included. If all the supplements for the new edition of *DC Heroes* reach this standard then the future of superhero gaming looks rosy indeed.

Mike Jarvis

REVIEWS

COMPUTER GAMES

WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEYDESIGNED BY
ED FLETCHER & JULIAN
LEFAYPUBLISHED BY
BETHESDA SOFTWORKS

PRICE £24.95

Game Play: ***

Graphics: ****

Available for the Amiga.

Ice Hockey seems to get a bad deal from the game companies, both boardgames and on computer. Whereas there are always acceptable baseball or gridiron games available, decent ice hockey systems can be counted on the fingers of one hand. **Wayne Gretzky Hockey** is therefore a long awaited addition to the range of simulations of this fine sport.

ON THE FACE OFF IT

Wayne Gretzky is not exactly a household name in the UK which is really a result of the low-key image of the game in this country. However, mention his name to any American hockey fan and the response will be comparable to a British reaction to Botham, Barnes and Faldo combined. He is probably the best ever at the sport and, despite a recent slowing of pace, has broken almost every scoring record in the books. With his nickname of 'The Great One', who better to feature on the cover of Bethesda's attempt to sew-up the computer hockey market?

The disk boots up with a animated sequence of Gretzky shooting a puck into the monitor screen, smashing it in a satisfying manner. From then on, the high standard is maintained. The view of the game is from directly above and about half of the rink is visible at all times. The

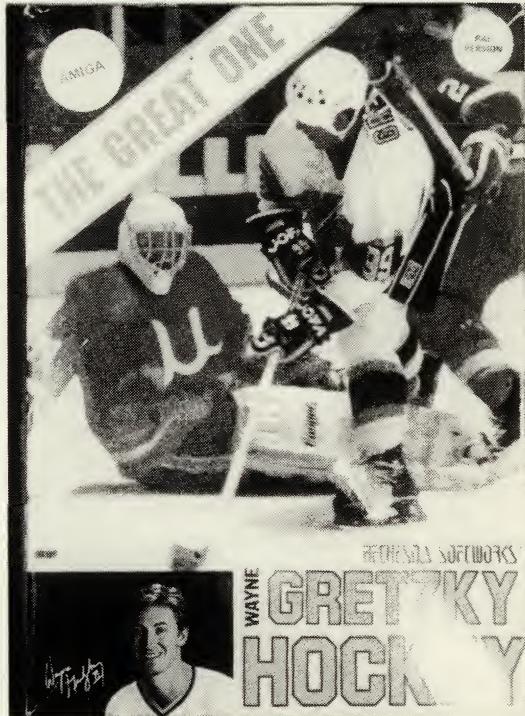
players do look rather small but the animation is spot on. You can clearly see the players accelerate, check and shoot and the motions of skating are captured perfectly. About the only thing missing is the spray of ice when they stop quickly. You get to choose both sets of uniform colours and the players skate out onto a smooth rink that, as the players move around, gradually gets covered with little skate trails. As the game progresses, the ice gets more and more cut up which is the ideal cue for the ice polishing machine to appear during the breaks. A nice touch and typical of the attention that has gone into the graphics.

STICK OF JOY

Gretzky Hockey can be played in three modes; two arcade-style and one pure strategy. To quickly cover the first two, the teams are controlled by joystick or mouse and the game offers face-to-face or solo options. The options are for a halfway house of arcade plus tactics or a pure arcade system. Given how difficult previous hockey games have been to play, **Gretzky Hockey** handles it all rather well with clever combinations of button pressing and joystick movements. The trouble is that the arcade game isn't too exciting. This is really a reflection of the nature of the real-life game and the ever present arcade learning curve. Basically, it is very difficult to score owing to a combination of a small net and very good goalminders; in hockey, only around 10% of shots on goal actually count. Combine this fact with hockey's offside rule, which means you are forever skating back behind the blue line, and one soon turns the arcade game off and switches to the strategy option.

PUCKISH

This is better, but not by much. As you would expect, you effectively become the coach of one of the supplied teams (a range of great teams of the past and Gretzky's current teams are provided) and



make all the tactical decisions. This boils down to selecting attacking ploys (attack on the left wing, push defencemen forward and so on) and the 'lines' (the shifts of players that alternate through the game) and timing their appearance. The bottom of the screen shows the 'energy' level of the line on the ice and when this is down to zero, your boys are knackered and should be replaced pronto. Aside from these limited inputs, you are left to watch the game unfold and this gives rise to my biggest gripe. Unbelievably, there is no indication during play of which player has the puck. Only when someone scores or makes an assist do they get a mention on the scoreboard (and in the end-game stats) but the rest of the time they are just anonymous blobs without even a uniform number. This is a stupid oversight (or design decision), and one that should be rectified as soon as possible.

SLAPSHOT

This moan aside, the action isn't too bad. From time to time there are fights (can you imagine hockey without them?), pen-

alties and, of course, the occasional goal. Both of these are blown up on the scoreboard and are neatly animated. As for 'realism', there don't seem to be enough long range slapshots and very few power play goals. In fact, there were more short-handed goals than the latter which seems distinctly odd. This could of course be the teams I chose but it seemed to hold true for the four full games I tried. Otherwise, it is pretty good. Attacks build up with some accurate passing and some players seem to excel at certain skills. Gretzky is good at the quick assist and shots and there is a Boston Bruin player who has a mean outlet pass. Sadly, we will never know his true identity . . .

The game is obviously based on the American National Hockey League but, because of the neat facility to input player names and performance ratings (in ten different categories), there would be nothing stopping the keen UK fan using the Durham Wasps or Fife Flyers, if that's your bag. I assume that there will be an NHL '88-89 season disk coming in the future for the league fans among you. I am not sure how the game will be accepted by replay gamers though. Ideally, a replay game is quick and accurate, offering stats and player trading that can be used to run a league. If there is detailed graphic action as well, great, but it still needs to be

fast. However, with games lasting at least 20 minutes and realistically much more, I can't believe that anyone will watch the action for an entire game. This is because the graphics, while very good, do not offer enough of interest. This means leaving the game running and going away to do something else, which is far from ideal.

Wayne Gretzky should not feel that he has made a mistake in adding his name to this game. As it stands, it is among the best hockey games around but sadly, given the earlier efforts in this field, that is not saying much. The main problem is that *Gretzky Hockey* falls between two stools. It is neither a good arcade or stats based game, while it attempts to do both. Additionally, it isn't likely to appeal to replay gamers because of the game length. The saving graces are the excellent graphic display, the player stats and the good, but basic, league features. *Gretzky Hockey* is a good attempt to simulate a game that I am not sure will work in the computer format. Like soccer and rugby, given the restraints of current technology, perhaps hockey just doesn't convert easily to this medium.

Mike Siggins

CHARTS

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IBM, C64, £29.99

Chart supplied by Strategic Plus Software, PO Box 8, Hampton, Middx TW12 3XA,

REBEL CHARGE AT CHICKAMAUGA

DESIGNED BY
CHUCK KROEGEL

PUBLISHED BY
SSI/US GOLD

PRICE £24.95

Game Play: ***

Graphics: **

Available for the IBM PC.

Rebel Charge at Chickamauga is a development of the highly regarded Gettysburg system from SSI, the grandfathers of computer simulation gaming. From what I can recollect of the earlier game, there are few changes or improvements here so my comments will apply equally well to both games.

RIVER OF DEATH

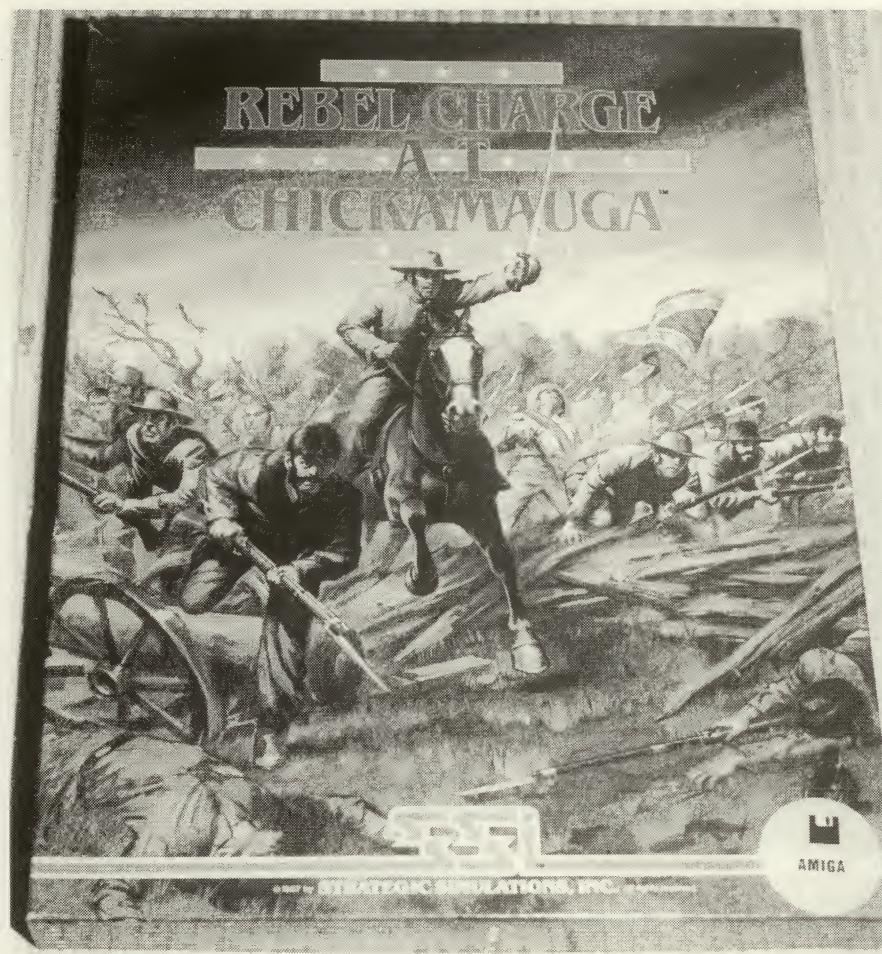
The game covers the battle that represented the last major offensive by the Confederate forces, commanded by General Bragg. Ranged against him were the Union forces under General Rosecrans, who were attempting to take Chattanooga, the South's railroad centre. SSI have chosen to depict the battle at the brigade level and include all the features that one would expect at this level such as command control, fatigue and senior leaders. The battle itself revolves around two important geographical features. Firstly, the dense woods of the area which meant that neither commander knew where his opponents lay at any one time and secondly, the eponymous Chickamauga Creek. Chickamauga is Cherokee for 'River of Death' and that was to prove prophetic when the two forces clashed in September, 1863. The game covers the two day battle in two hour turns.

FOG OF WAR

The game system is pretty straightforward in that the forces (infantry, cavalry and artillery) are depicted as either icons or symbols within squares as opposed to the usual hexes. The board covers 54 by

64 squares so there is plenty of room for manoeuvre, restricted only by the close terrain mentioned above. The nicest feature is that you can set the game's parameters to reflect different player handicaps and there is also an option to play with hidden enemy forces which is highly recommended for the fog of war benefits. The map is viewed either in strategic mode which is an overall picture of your positions or in the 'zoomed in' tactical mode which is used for movement, firing and identification of units. This works acceptably well and these functions are effected by the mouse or short-cut keyboard commands. The handling of units is detailed and sometimes a little complicated but allows for such subtleties as facing and column or line formations. Using the menu system, units can be checked for their current strength, morale condition, disruption level and all those other important things that a commander needs to know.

Play balance is pretty good overall. Victory points are earned by either causing losses to the enemy or by capturing guns



and objective squares. The Union forces start at the top and West of the map and have to advance South and East to capture the fords and bridges over the creek. The rebels start in the South and need to grab major road junctions and the exits to the North of the board. Troop quality is quite varied but is roughly on a par. The forces are broadly balanced between all three arms, with the Union having a slight edge in artillery, and the Confederates a 2:1 advantage in cavalry. My first game, using the basic rules, took the best part of two hours (against the computer, which plays a good game) and saw my Confederate forces romp home to an easy win by virtue of a masterly cavalry outflanking move, writes General Hiram P Modesty III. The second game was almost twice as long and a friend's Rebs somehow sneaked a marginal victory. The increase in time was probably a combination of a much closer game, human deliberation and the fact that we used the advanced rules which give more options and detail.

PRIMITIVE SQUARES

I may be a little biased, but I have never really rated SSI's graphics. *Chickamauga* does nothing to change that view and the map looks very much like a throwback to the early eighties. Nothing much has changed from the blocky, primitive

squares of the very first 8-bit simulations and I wonder if the capabilities of the ST and Amiga's graphics have been noted at SSI's design studio? There can be no other explanation for the adherence to such basic map graphics. See to this, would you chaps? The rest of the screen design isn't too bad and information is neatly and clearly displayed.

The components are pretty standard for a computer game (how many ways can we reviewers say, 'You get a box, a disk and a booklet?') but in this case they are worthy of mention because the manual is very well written, produced on posh glossy paper and has a passable set of historical notes and strategy tips which so many games of this type are lacking. There is also a high quality colour laminated map which is backed with useful charts and tables. There is no copy protection on the disk, so backups can be made easily, and the startup routine simply requires the entry of one number from the manual. Good work, SSI.

EVOLUTIONARY GRIPES

While by no means a bad game, *Chickamauga* blazes no trails and has no innovations that I can readily spot. It is really the classic 'series' release and everything about it says 'eminently workable, but uninspiring'. It also suffers from

a somewhat antiquated system compared to the likes of *Fire Brigade* and even SSI's own *Red Lightning* system. At the end of the day, it is the movement and administration functions that have to be smooth to make the game interesting and *Chickamauga* doesn't quite make the grade. It is clumsy systems like this that prompt traditional boardgamers to denigrate computer versions of their favourite topics and unless something radical is done by the majors, that could remain the case for some time to come. Evolutionary gripes aside (as SSI are by no means alone here), *Chickamauga* is a good, well balanced game using an established and no doubt familiar system. If the period interests you it should be a recommended purchase, but I am left with a feeling of having to use an old style dial phone when there are push button systems on the market.

Mike Siggins

FULL METAL PLANETE

DESIGNED BY
BROCAR MORLA

PUBLISHED BY
INFOGRAMES

PRICE £24.95

Game Play: ********

Graphics: ********

Available on the Amiga, with ST and PC versions on their way. Reviewed on the Amiga.

No prizes for guessing what subject this game covers. It is of course an indecently quick adaptation of the excellent boardgame of the same name, published by Ludodelire and reviewed by yours truly in GI #11. Apart from that, given that the conversion has been handled by the now well established Infogrames, there isn't much to say. Words such as 'faithful reproduction' and 'workmanlike conversion' are usually rolled out at times like this and I find myself having to do exactly that. This is a neat and clever adaptation for the Amiga and with Infogrames's inspired handling of the graphics, the result is a winner.

It is going to be difficult to describe exactly how the game works without repeating much of last month's text. Suffice to say that there are hardly any changes at all to the rules (apart from the opportunity to have hidden units) and the computer acts as the rule book, score keeper and opponent, should the latter be desired. The game can be played by any combination of human and computer players up to a total of four.

CLOCKWORK ORANGE

The game is controlled entirely by the mouse and icons. From the starting sequence where you choose your colour and company name (and flag), every action is achieved through simply pointing at the screen. This makes play smooth, fast and almost as easy as using one's hands as in the board version. The only task which is slightly more long-winded is the loading and unloading of ore and vehicles onto crabs or barges but this is understandable. One feature unavoidably missing from the computer version is the restrictive three minute time limit for each turn. Now, the time available for each turn is ample as, unlike the overall view of the map one normally has, you need to take time to check out the strategic position (on the large scale map called from the main menu) as well as the tactical situation.

Play balance is extremely good. Not only does every player have exactly the same forces and powers, but the availability of computer opponents means that the rather boring two player contests are a thing of the past. Simply sit down with a friend, activate two computer mining companies and away you go - no more complaints of grudge attacks or unfairness - the computer steams in without compassion or malice. With three or four human players we get the usual but unavoidable anti-social situation of one player inputting orders while the others are sitting around idle, but at least in this game it doesn't matter if they actually watch the events rather than having to hide in the other room.

PATHS OF GLORY

In a straight conversion, the only place to stamp one's individuality on a game is in the graphics department. Infogrames have really gone to town here and the result is impressive if a little 'muddy' in their choice of colours. The map is depicted as an aerial view and it shows the important mountains, reefs, sea and floodlands very clearly. This is all overlaid by a very fine hex grid which can be used as a guide for movement or removed

altogether with a simple menu command. This is a nice touch as although hexes are important for placing of units, firing and movement, the program is written in such a way that you really don't notice that the lines are missing. Other software houses please take note. The pieces are placed onto the map using the mouse and they move around much as you would expect by clicking the mouse on the destination 'hex'. Where the game scores is in the graphic animation of the landing sequences, explosions in combat and the excellent animated sequences that show the land being slowly covered or revealed as the tide changes. Seeing the hexes coloured blue is a great help in play as one doesn't need to remember which are in play as required in the boardgame. As a final neat touch, there is a basic graphics toolkit supplied that enables you to design a flag for your company. Of course, with my wholly unfounded reputation as a gaming gourmand, my miners toil under the sign of the pepperoni rampant.

SHINING EXAMPLE

Infogrames are rapidly becoming one of the best software houses around at the moment. Their unmistakable French flair

for graphics and screen design is winning fans all over and a glance at the catalogue included with **Full Metal Planete** is a good guide to their notable past efforts (**Sim City**, **Hostages**, **Tintin and North & South**) and future mouthwatering projects such as the upcoming rolegame **Drakken** which promises to set new standards in the genre. I can certainly think of no better company to tackle the conversion of **Full Metal Planete** and they have done a fine job. I am not sure of the merits of owning the boardgame as well as the computer game but they are both worthy products and, for once, the computer version is cheaper than the boardgame! The boardgame's advantage is the tactile quality of the metal pieces while the computer's superb graphics bring the theme to life and neatly detach the players from the slightly chess-like feel displayed by the board version. Overall, though, **Full Metal Planete** is so close a reproduction that I have to give it four stars exactly like its manual cousin and can I have the next Infogrames release to review, please Brian?

Mike Siggins

IBM, Amiga
C-64
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STAR TREK V – THE FINAL FRONTIER

DESIGNED BY
LEVEL SYSTEMS INC

PUBLISHED BY
MINDSCAPE

PRICE £24.95

Game Play: **

Graphics: ****

Available for the PC.

I was hoping this game, which I presume is loosely based on the film of the same name, would prove to be of better quality than the accompanying joke. Initial indications were promising. There is a suitably pompous scenario, in keeping with the Star Trek tradition, in which Captain James T Kirk has to guide the Enterprise across the universe to the planet Sha Ka Ree, thwart the Klingons without killing any innocent bystanders or precipitating a galactic war, capture a Klingon starship captain and return to Old Kent Road without passing 'Go' before the shops shut (*Are you quite sure about this? – Ed.*).

TOUPEE OR NOT TOUPEE

The scene setting preamble includes some impressive graphics which, although rendered in a brightly coloured cartoon style, suit the game. The detail is not quite fine enough for you to spot the join on the toupees of Kirk, Sulu, Chekov and Scotty (not for nothing was the film subtitled 'Wigs In Space') but at least all of the main characters are recognisable.

So. You are Captain Kirk. Without (horror of horrors) even time to take a shower, you must take off on your mission, to pungently go where no man has etc etc. The main screen of the game simulates the view from the captain's chair. In front of you is the viewscreen, with lots of pretty stars twinkling in the distance. At the bottom of the screen are lots of gauges giving you readings on phaser power, shield power (presumably not needed as you don't have time for a shower), engine power, life support and average power usage. There are also sensors indicating your position in relation to other objects such as planets or enemy ships, and your

altitude. Other gizmos indicate your speed, how many dilithium crystals you have, and how many photon torpedoes are left.

It's all a tad confusing and overwhelming at first, but you soon get used to it. Across the top of your screen are flashed messages from the crew. Lt Uhura normally says something inscrutable such as 'I am getting negative readings in the neutral zone, Captain' while, regrettably, Scotty says very little except when the engines get damaged; not even a token 'But



People often ask me how many ears I've got. The answer is three: a left ear, a right ear and Space . . . the final front ear.

Captain, the engines cannae take it!' The prime members of the crew can be contacted and given instructions via the functions keys. When, for instance, you hit F1, you hear the familiar 'piping aboard' naval whistle sound effect, and up pops the miserable phisog of First Officer Spock on the left of the screen.

CREW STATIONS

Each crew member performs duties consistent with his or her screen role. Bones tends the sick and overacts, Sulu plots courses, hits the accelerator pedal or the brakes, Chekov blasts the living daylights out of things despite being sloshed on vodka, Uhura monitors communications, plugs in the universal translator and smoulders fetchingly, and Scotty boosts the power on everything in sight and occasionally switches to manual override for a bit of variety.

Having read the description of the plot, and the facilities available to you as Captain of the Enterprise, you might be forgiven for thinking that this has all the makings of an intriguing adventure/strategy game. Unfortunately, you would be wrong, for *Star Trek V* is, at heart, an arcade game, or more accurately, four arcade games strung together.

The first section involves navigating the Enterprise through a 'wormhole', a kind of twisty space tunnel in which your phasers mysteriously malfunction. You have to avoid oncoming meteors while trying to lock your tractor beam on to the dili-

thium crystals, which seem to be plentiful in this part of space. The Enterprise is subject to chronic oversteering, leading to you invariably hitting the side of the space tunnel and taking damage to your shields. Various crew members can be dispatched to try to fix the shields, but if they fail to do so before the next hit a wall or meteor then you will take further damage, and will find all manner of ship functions disappearing, about the most vital of which are your navigation aids – the viewscreen, and the sensors. Consequently, at the same time as trying to steer the damn ship you are having to assign manpower to make damage repairs. No wonder William Shatner's hair fell out.

There are three further segments, involving a Klingon minefield, a fistfight with the Klingon captain, and some ship to ship combat. Assuming you are reasonably competent at arcade games, *Star Trek V* should give you six or seven evenings of entertainment. When you complete the mission you can move on to a harder difficulty level, where you get more of everything – more meteors, more mines, more Birds of Prey. Despite the graphics and the very familiar subject matter, it is not particularly addictive. It is, perhaps, a bit too cerebral for your average shoot-em-up fan and probably a little too reliant on arcade adventure to appeal to the adult market.

John Harrington

Soccer Special

John Harrington goes over the (desk)top.

The first football management game I encountered was a late-sixties product, called **Soccerboss**. It featured footballers of varying skill levels, represented by different coloured plastic figures which you plugged into a pegboard football pitch. You totted up the skill levels of your players to determine which die you threw to get the match result. There were lots of different coloured dice with some having more high numbers than others.

You played your matches against other 'Soccerbosses' or against 'non-player teams'. Trading between bosses was allowed, of course, and often became necessary in the event of injuries or your star player being found legless in Studio Valbonne at six in the morning on the day of the match.

Soccerboss introduced two of the basic elements in soccer management games: numerical skill levels for each player, and transfer activity between clubs. As we shall see, in the twenty intervening years some game designers have been incapable of moving much beyond these simple concepts.

When the 16-bit computers came on the market, there were high hopes that the football management game would come of age, but such was the phenomenal sales success of **Football Manager** on the eight-bit, there was always the likelihood that some companies would take the easy route and produce thinly disguised souped-up versions of **Football Manager**.

THE GAMES

Before I begin reviewing the games, a word about the ratings I have assigned. Graphics generally do not play a great part in management games, so my rating for graphics will take into account ease of use – for instance, do you have to keep returning to the main desk to perform repetitious tasks? As for my ratings of game play, I have done these on the as-



John Harrington boots up

sumption that you, the reader, are a fan of football simulations. If you are not, then deduct two stars from each rating. I know this gives some games a negative rating: believe me, they deserve it.

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II

Designed by T Huggard & J De Salis. Published by D&H games. Available for the ST, Amiga, Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad. Reviewed on the Amiga.

Game Play: *

Graphics: **

This game is a clear derivative of **Football Manager**, but the designers obviously believe that more means better. The back page of the rules lists 37 features of the game, including such 'essentials' as testimonials, club lottery

Photo: Allsports

and VAT returns. Most of these features the manager has no influence over. The majority just happen to him (VAT returns happen about every four months, which tends to suggest there should be a 'Sack accountant' option), or are there for reference (League Matches to Go counter).

You start out fielding job offers for various racy fourth division teams. The board of any given club will offer you a weekly wage and a contract of a specified length. You can either accept the offer, or renegotiate. If you choose the latter you will receive different job offer terms. These appear to be randomly generated, and if you have the patience you can sit there renegotiating until such time as the board offers you a good deal.

Once ensconced in the managerial hot seat you can start performing actions. The main screen allows you to access drop down menus, under the following headings: main, club, finance. Most of your managerial activity will probably take place on the 'Club' menu. This allows you to look at the skill levels of the players in your squad, order extra training (if you have employed a coach), check on injuries, hire more employees and so on. Players are classified as defenders, midfielders or forwards – there is no distinction between a full back and a centre back, for instance – although a player's position may be changed (from, say, defender to forward), often at the cost of a skill level.

It is interesting to note that if, through injuries, you are forced to play a goalkeeper in an outfield position, his skill level drops to level zero and when he returns to goalkeeping his skill level stays at level zero (*Presumably we're talking about Bobby Mimms here – Ed.*). Unfortunately,

Soccer Special

the rules give no indication as to how matches are resolved, so you are left to trust that the programmer's concept of how matches are won is in tune with your own. There was no evidence to suggest that playing a 5-1-1 formation increased your chances of not conceding a goal, or that 4-2-1 led to high scoring matches.

Once you have picked your team (plus one substitute), you are ready to play your match. Make sure you have plenty of coffee in the house, because you will be popping out to the kitchen quite a lot to make a cuppa in order to avoid the most boring sequence in the entire game.

Having selected 'Play match' from the 'Main' menu you are presented with a screen shot of a deserted football ground with what looks like a score of pink washing up gloves arm wrestling in the penalty box. In the top left of the screen is the scoreboard, displaying the name of your team, the name of your opponents, and the clock counter. The clock counter ticks by 'minute by minute' while you stare at the screen, waiting for the scoreboard to change. When it does, the name of the scorer and the time of the goal is printed below the scoreboard.

Occasionally a message regarding a sending off will flash across the bottom of the screen. While this thrilling sequence is in progress you can stop the clock to send on a sub.

And that's it – your one input into the match once it has started. Each match takes about 75 seconds to resolve. Admittedly when promotion or relegation is at stake, the countdown in the last few minutes can be tense, but it would have done everyone a favour to have had the clock tick by in 10 minute segments, with only the last ten minutes going by minute by minute.

If the aim of this game is to simulate the frustrations of managing a low level football club then it succeeds admirably. The game is challenging but the mechanics are so awful or so random that it is a real chore to have to grind you way through the season. The layout of some of the screens is baffling. Why, for instance, is a player's age only available on the 'in-

juries/goals scored' page? Why is his temper rating not available on the 'Squad' page, alongside the skill ratings?

The designers should be given credit for introducing such elements as contract negotiations into the game (even if they are badly handled), and for giving you the option to meddle in the financial side of things, with loans, mortgages, share issues and increased ticket prices. At the end of the day, though, Brian, all the added features cannot compensate for the deficiencies of the core of the system, which is as dated as wearing your shirt outside your shorts. **Football Director II**, through failing to include any tactical considerations (ever heard of 'playing for a draw', chaps?) is just an exercise in number shuffling.

you would expect, such as trainees, transfers, league tables, cup draws, variable levels of play, a facility to change the names of your players (so you can rebuild the great 1954 cup winning side of Glos-sop FC if you want to) and the all-important save game feature. And glory be, it dispenses with the 'Single skill level' concept for players.

Players are rated 1–5 in several aspects of the game: Control, Passing, Heading, Tackle, Shot, Speed. In addition you are provided with details of each player's age, preferred position, his wage, how many games he has played and how many goals he has scored.

The different skills assigned to each player give you an inkling as to the player's profile, and should you so desire you can build a certain style of team, such as the ball playing pansies of Tottenham or the hard tackling headcases of Wim-bledon. Where the game falls down in this respect is in not giving any clue as to how these different player abilities have an impact on the match. Nevertheless, as a bit of added 'chrome' it is a welcome bonus to those of us who like to put a bit of our own imagination into a game.

Written in Fast Basic, whatever that is, the game runs a bit slower than commer-cial software, but not annoyingly so. The menu driven game system is elegantly laid out, and easy to use. The afore-mentioned Mr Woodhouse informs me that the game is a tad on the easy side and that player abilities get out of whack after a few seasons, but for the price this game is good value, which is why it gets the third star for game play.

FOOTBALL 88

Designed by Simon Rush. Published by Budgie UK. Available for the ST.

Game Play: ***

Graphics: ***

I am indebted to fellow GI contributor Mike Woodhouse for the loan of this game, which comes on a Public Domain diskette. I am afraid I do not know the price, but I suspect it would be around £3. Further details should be available from 42 York Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8SB.

Football 88 has a lot of things going for it. It has a multi-player option (up to six players). It is cheap. It has all the features



Soccer Special

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR

Designed by Gremlin Graphics. Published by Kixx. Price £2.99 (tape). Reviewed on the Atari 800XL

Game Play: **

Graphics: *

We are back in 8-bit land here, with a game which is probably also available for the 8-bit king, the Sinclair Spectrum. I have included **Footballer of the Year** in this overview of footie games just for a bit of variety, rather than because it is a good game.

What makes this game different is that you are a footballer, rather than a manager. Your aim is to get voted Footballer of the Year, a task made difficult on two counts: one, the average football writer would not know a good player if he had his leg broken by one, and two, you start out as a 17 year old in the Fourth Division.

The game is like a board game with some very crude computer graphics thrown in. You start off with £5000 and with this money you 'buy' transfer cards, incident cards or 'goal scoring opp8ity'. The transfer cards give you a chance of being spotted by a scout and maybe being signed by a better club. The incident cards might just as well be labelled 'Chance', as they can be good (such as receiving a win bonus) or bad (such as breaking a toenail). If you buy a 'Goal scoring opportunity' card then you move into the arcade sequence. It's very simplistic. Just guide your player with your joystick towards the ball, hit the fire button and hope your shot goes past the keeper. The graphics look as if they have been licensed from Etch-a-Sketch.

For £2.99 you don't expect much, and you don't get much. The under-12s might find it good value, but it is unlikely anyone else will find it even worth the wait incurred by the long loading time of the tape. Had it been a board game, of



Lou Macari: Punter of the Year?

course, improvements and amendments could be made in an effort to salvage it, but in the computer world when you buy a turkey all you can do is to get stuffed.

SUPERLEAGUE SOCCER

Designed by Jeffrey Knight. Published by Impressions. Available on the Atari ST and the Amiga. Reviewed on the ST.

Game Play: ***

Graphics: ****

Another game that attempts to shake off the constraints imposed by the success of **Football Manager**. In **Superleague Soccer** you manage a first division team, and your goal is to win every trophy in sight, year in year out. The Football League, the

Photo: Sport & General

FA Cup, Littlewoods Cup, European Champions Cup, European Cup Winners Cup and the UEFA Cup are all featured, as is relegation. Succumb to the latter fate and you are sacked, and you have to start another game.

Game difficulty is set by your choice of starting team. Choose to manage Liverpool, Spurs, Arsenal or Manchester United and you will have a good chance of winning the title, thanks to the financial resources of these clubs and the fact that they start off with good players. Guiding Norwich, Forest, Millwall or Everton to the title is a little harder, while for a real challenge you can take on the manager's job at Charlton, Luton or Wimbledon. The game also allows you to change the name of the club, so if you happen to be a rabid Blackpool sup-

porter, you can attempt to defy gravity and keep them in the First Division (Where they belong - Ed).

In a break with tradition for football games, as well as allowing you to change the names of the players, you can also change their abilities too! Thus, in my case, I constructed the current Spurs squad according to my assessment of their abilities and hey presto, three seasons and several signings from Liverpool later, Spurs had won the title. Get me Terry Venables on the phone right away.

Of course, this facility is open to abuse but you are only cheating yourself, so full marks to Impressions, say I, for its inclusion. Nevertheless, 'alternative reality' fans might prefer the option of managing a team of fictional players. The game has a large database of players of specific abilities and mercifully, they all have sensible names like Watkins, or Temple. There was even a J Haddington, who may well be distantly related to me. In **Football Director II** you have to put up with

Soccer Special

names like J Fnufs or P Bogson, while in *Football 88* you get the even more unpronounceable S Xjfjdjdgf. Both games allow you to change the names of the players, but it is tiresome to have to do so.

DANCING IN THE STREETS

For my first game I elected to manage Luton, on the grounds that I would probably be inept on my first attempt and that should Luton get relegated from the First Division this would at least be an occasion for dancing in the streets by true football fans everywhere. I started with a squad of 10 players and a bank balance of about £2 000 000.

Each player, including the goalkeepers, is rated according to the following abilities: Fitness, Speed, Tackling, Heading, Shooting, Control, Morale. These are much the same as the attributes in *Football 88*, but in this game you are given some guidance as to what the abilities mean. After I had sifted through all this information I started to get quite excited about this game. You really get a sense of the style of a team, and you can make decisions such as converting a nippy, tough tackling but goal shy midfielder by playing your back-up centre back in central midfield. Furthermore, the game allows you to choose a playing formation for each match. All the popular formations are available: 4-3-3, 4-2-4, 4-4-2 and 5-4-1, plus some oddities such as 4-5-1 (as used by Spurs in the Clive Allen era) and 5-3-2.

Differentiation is made between full backs and centre backs, central midfield and right/left midfield, and strikers and left/right wingers, which in terms of computer football management games is a revolutionary concept.

The transfer market is intelligently handled. You can opt to look for first division players, players from other divisions, foreign international and schoolboy players. As a bonus, the option of 'shopping' for other first division players gives you access to all the details about the players in the team you are facing next. Crikey, I thought. This means you can actually pick a team to counteract the strengths of your opponents. For

instance, if they have got a skilful, tough tackling but slow left back, switch your speedy wide midfielder to right wing and burn the full back! By this stage I was preparing to take a full page advert in *Games International* proclaiming how great this game is.

What a chump I was! When you select your team, as you highlight each player's name to pick him for the side, the TT (standing for 'total team'?) number at the top of the screen changes. It also changes when you move players to a different position or change the formation. This means, I suspect, that instead of matching up strikers' versus central defenders, wingers against full backs, or determining shots on goal by the amount of possession won by the midfield and their ability to make use of it through good control and passing, all the game does is compare your TT total against the (stored) TT total of the opposition.

I experimented by playing two right wingers up front and found that, with the right players, this can improve your TT rating even in 4-4-2 formation (*I inadvertently played a game without a goalkeeper and still won 2-1. Mind you, we were playing Charlton - Ed*). So much for a balanced attack.

EDDIE EDWARDS

When I discovered this, I felt cheated. It was like watching a team with brilliant approach play who get the ball in the penalty box, only for some prawn to blast it twenty yards wide. Despite this disappointment the game does have some merit. You can still enjoy dealing in the transfer market, and there is some pleasure to be gained from watching your young players improve as the season progresses. Call me sentimental, but it is also sad to see a faithful servant of the club go downhill faster than Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards after he turns 30.

In keeping with the industry perception that no strategy game can possibly be interesting without an arcade sequence tacked on to it, the game also contains an option whereby you can play each match arcade-style, rather than simply having the result printed up for you. The arcade

game is a waste of time, however. The top half of the screen features the football pitch, populated by eleven players on each side. The bottom half of the screen has a menu of the names of the eleven players in your team. To get a player to move you have to click on his name, then move the mouse the pitch and click it, whereupon said player will run towards where you clicked the mouse.

MOCKERY

The figures on the screen are too small to be numbered and, confusingly, the game system insists on listing the players from left to right (keeper, left back, left half, right half and so on), so you keep sending your right winger off in chase of balls on the left wing. Passing and shooting are difficult to perform, involving as they do the setting of a power gauge and then the giving of instructions to the relevant player to run just beyond where the ball is. Worst of all, the performance of the players in no way correlates to any info you may have keyed in, thus making a mockery of the game system.

Fortunately there is an option where you just get the result, pure and simple. None of this waiting for 75 seconds while the clock ticks down. Just: bang! You lost 2-0, now let's see how the rest of the division got on.

I know nothing about computer programming so I can only presume that the creation of a logical mechanism for resolving matches is a programming nightmare. *Soccer Superleague* has all the factors incorporated in it to make it the ultimate football game, but cops out by refusing to make use of them all. I'd like a game where my 5-4-1 speedy, counter-attacking team outsmarts the opposing team because they have a one-paced square back four, or because my midfielders are stronger in the tackle. I don't want to play a game where my team wins because they are rated 92 and the opponents are rated 83.

More Soccer Computer Games next issue.

SSI

Despite wearing an extremely daft hat, Napoleon has always proved a popular figure amongst gamers. The latest in a long list of games bearing his name is the PC version of **Battles of Napoleon**. Previously this game (and the hat) were very well received on the C64 version.

Fantasy fans will be chuffed to hear of the release of **Champions of Krynn**, which is essentially the **Pools of Radiance** system transferred to a *Dragonlance* setting.

US Gold

Knights of Cristallion is an in-house project from this Brummie based distribution company. They describe the game as being like 'nothing that has ever been done before'. Well, they would, wouldn't they?

Electronic Arts

Imperium, we are told, is a 'complex strategy game set in the near future, which simulates the next thousand years of human development'. Crikey! Furthermore, to succeed you will need to 'skilfully manipulate economic, diplomatic, political and military factors'. Lawdluvaduck, squire. Snakes and Ladders was never like this.



SSG

'G'day. What we have here for all you Pommie bastards is a brand new tank game **Panzer Battles**. This is the latest in our fair dinkum 'Battlefront' series, and if yer don't like it we couldn't give a four XXXX. If tanks are a bit too macho for you pommie woofahs, why not have a bash at **Gold of the Americas**? - a multi-player game of exploration and killing

BITS

foreigners, featuring a few cobbers in pirate hats.'

Mirrorsoft

Still with hats, **Austerlitz** is the latest in the series of Napoleonic games using the system developed by Dr Peter Turcan. Out now on all formats.

Hats off to Cap'n Bob's company for releasing the long awaited computer version of GDW's **Harpoon** on their PSS label. It's due out mid Feb (PC only). Contrary to expectations, the story does not involve the spearing of a bloated Czech whale, but is in fact the ultimate simulation of a NATO v Warsaw Pact (RIP) clash. The intelligence database was compiled by Larry Bond, an unemployed NATO wargames referee, and co-author of the novel *Red Storm Rising*. Loony Right Winger Tom Clancy, urrenly wiping the egg off his face, was the credited author of the book.

If you fancy a life on the ocean bed, then **Wolf Pack** should be your kind of game. One of the first games of its kind to fully utilise the VGA graphics capability. Blimey! PC only, with ST and Amiga versions expected soon.

Strategic Plus

Following the success of **Battlehawks 1942**, Lucasfilms have released **Their Finest Hour**. This Battle of Britain simulation features state-of-the-art graphics, a complete pilots roster, and lots of handlebar moustaches. What ho! PC only.

Believe it, or what?

No more going blind trying to trace line-of-sight rules. No more tearing what's left of your hair out trying to figure if your troops are in supply. Avalon Hill's board-game **Third Reich** has been converted on to computer with the ST version coming first. According to Jack Dott at AH: 'It looks great'.

Yet another mouthwatering game is **Second front** from SSI. No release date as yet, but we'll keep you posted. Seminal cyberpunk novel **Neuromancer** has been

converted into an adventure game. Although it has been on sale for some time in the States, its UK release, through Electronic Arts, will not be until April at the earliest.

A doctor writes

Ever dreamed of being a specialist abdominal surgeon? Well, now's your chance. **Life and Death** (published by Mindscape) is a new medical simulation in which you, the doctor, get the chance to diagnose and cure (hopefully) various patients with differing symptoms. Colour graphics (yuck!) and full sound effects(?). Comes with a surgical hat, sorry, mask, and a pair of surgical gloves (honest). What, no sick bag?

Accolade

Hold on to your hat, it's formation flying with Marlene Dietrich. **Blue Angels** is the latest 'formation flight simulation' from Accolade. Fly where only angels dare! Bog off to the wild blue yonder! Throw up as you execute a 360° roll! Available now on the PC.

'Two tons of Titanium and vengeance', no, we're not talking about Cyril Smith, but **Day of the Viper**, a new game set in 2782 AD where you're up against a bunch of killer MPs disguised as robots (could you spot the difference?). Mechanical politicos attempt to fry you to your mainframe. Or, as the press release puts it: 'You snooze, you lose.'

Mindscape

Ever wanted to destroy your monitor with a single blow of the hand? Now your big chance to learn how. In **Windwalker** (no relation), you discover the ancient martial arts. Not to mention magic forms such as Shamanism, Idolatry, Alchemy, and Deism. 'Experience complete life simulation with game characters who have varied daily schedules (obviously unemployed). Entice them into an 'in-depth conversation' before karate chopping them to death.'

From Zen to the art of motorcycle maintenance with **Harley Davidson - The Road to Sturgis**.

'Hey, bro, like whaddya rebellin' against?'

'Whaddya got?' (© M Brando).

Difficulty levels of this road hog simulation will 'separate the wanna-bes from the hardcores'. Golly!

Free classifieds

SMALL ADS

WANTED: Games enthusiasts, especially wargames and strategy games. Over 20 yrs only please. Based in Hinckley, Leicestershire. **0445 615995.**

WANTED URGENTLY, a copy of board game *Kensington* to buy. Let me know your price. Rebecca Johnson, Japonica Cottage, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6QS. **0823 286937** evenings and weekends.

ATTENTION USA! Wanted: *Starfall* (Yaquinto), willing to buy or exchange for any German game. Hans Reinhold, Wiesenkamp 12, 3045 Bispingen, West Germany.

GERMAN GAMES COLLECTOR wants to buy/exchange general and sports games. Dr K Rehders, Walldorfer Str 1, D6000 Frankfurt 70.

WANTED: Games enthusiasts, Bournemouth area. Prefer strategy games but anything interesting considered. Possibility of forming club. Please contact John Johnstone, 18 Hood Crescent, Bournemouth BH10 4DD. **0202 518245.9**

SPIELBOX

Bi-monthly German language games review magazine. Send DM 54,- (plus DM 9.80 if you want it sent air mail) for a one year - six issue subscription to: Huss-Verlag GmbH, Joseph-Dollinger-Bogen 5, Postfach 46 04 80, D-8000 München 46, West Germany.

WANTED: Waddingtons Air Charter. Drew Shotliff, **0525 377949.**

WANTED DESPERATELY: Election from Intellect Games, and other old games. Can help too. Rudolf Rühle, Burgweg 33, D5300 Bonn 1.

COLLECTION of over 50 games for sale - mostly board games; lots of rare titles. SAE for list to: Jim Crawford, 11 Canon Court, Nevendon, Basildon, Essex.

WANTED: copies of *Mentalis*, *Pagoda*, *Thought-Wave*, *Wildlife Adventure*, *Trade* and *Infinity*. Contact Paul Gabriner, Dr Koomansstraat 28, 1391 XB Abcoude, Holland.

TRANSLATIONS NEEDED

Of the following games' rules for a forthcoming GI article: *Ordino Trall* (Hachette, French), *Kunterbunte Bimmelbahn* (Jumbo), *Auf Der Schwabsischen* (Ravensburger), *Bummelbahn* (Ravensburger), *Fahr Zu Kleine Lok* (Ravensburger), *Fuzzi Heinz Und Schlendrian* (Spears) and *Strategie Auf Schleiden* (Spika, East German). Write to Alan R Moon, 15 Burnside Street, Lancaster, NH03584, USA.

GO - oriental boardgame. British Association, membership: Brian Timmins, The Hollies, Wollerton, Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 3LY. **063084 292.**

POSTAL DIPLOMACY. Interested? Send SAE to John, 92 Sandyhill Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0JA.

FOR SALE - back issues of *White Dwarf*, Nos 1, 5-7, 13-73. Photocopies of missing issues available. Offers to Geoff Smith, **0602 253281.**

GAMES FOR SALE or exchange. SAE for list. R J Hankey, 15 Watlands Road, Bignall End, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST7 8QQ.

WANTED a copy of *Stack*, published by BB Games (reviewed GI #7). Please contact P Duckworth, 75A Nags Head Road, Ponders End, Middlesex EN3 7AA. **01-443 2329** evenings.

IS THERE a games group on the Isle of Wight? Does anyone wish to form one? Jacob, **853517.**

DISTRIBUTORS

and retail stockists wanted in all countries except Britain and Germany, for *Railway Rivals* maps and other games: Rotherne Games (GI), 102 Priory Road, Milford Haven SA73 2ED, UK. **06462 2752**

IMAZINE the rolegame fanzine, currently taking an overlong 'rest' thanks to GI, back issues 16 to 20 still available. 80p per copy to Paul Mason, 19 Rusholme Road, Putney, London SW15 3JX.

GAMES FOR SALE. Selling off even more of the contents of my loft! If you would like a copy of my second list - the ORANGE one - then please send a large SAE to R E Ruck, 47 Chichester Drive East, Saltdean, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 8AN. Nearly 150 games, covering all categories and ages.

WANTED: Waddingtons' *Formula One*, ASS NIKI Lauda's *Formel Eins* and Ravensburger's *Grand Prix*. Top price paid for these games and some old and new games for swap. S T Godi, 262 The Colonnades, Porchester Terrace North, London W2 6AT. **01-262 7093.**

WANTED: Nomad Gods board game, *Wyrms Footnotes*, figures, other *RuneQuest* stuff to buy or borrow. I'd be pleased to hear from any *RuneQuest* fanzines, LRP sites in the West Mids or anyone really. Oh, and if anyone happens to own a large wood . . . **021-705 9022** evenings.

SECONDHAND GAMES! Bought, sold or part exchanged. Send SAE for list of over 100 games to: Jim Crawford, 11 Canon Court, Nevendon, Basildon, Essex. **0268 534002.**

GAMES REPS

Wanted for all areas. Send cv to: Michael Callaghan, Chart Hobby Ltd, Chart House, Station Road, East Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN16 3AG.

GI REVIEWER selling games to buy food! Old and new rolegames and supplements, plus quite a few boardgames and wargames. Send largish SAE to James Wallis, 8 College Gardens, London N18 2XR.

GAMES PLAYERS wanted in the Evesham/Worcester area. *Acquire*, *1830* etc. Contact Martin Hammon, 'Benefield', Middle Lane, Pershore WR10 3LZ.

ATTENTION! 20 NEW games, just waiting to be marketed by the right company. Can you help? Then write to: Mr D King, All Year Round Games, 5 Syracuse Avenue, Rainham RM13 9SR, England. All offers considered.

ECW WARGAME: The King's War covering the ECW 1642-46. 44 page A4 rules booklet. 18" x 23.5" map, 7 scenarios and 9 counter sheets (you cut and paste). Already sold in excess of 700 copies. £6 post free UK (£7 surface mail) from Charles Vasey, 75 Richmond Park Road, East Sheen, London SW14 8JY.

3 NEW BOARD GAMES

Launch Oct 1990. Small investment required in return for a piece of the action.

For further details contact Tony or David at Martone, Excell Print, St Michael's Works, Aldham Rd, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 6BJ, **823262.**

POSTAL DIPLOMACY (and variants). Any budding diplomats interested contact EI Gamesmaster, send SAE to 28 Feckenham Road, Astwood Bank, Redditch B96 6DN.

22 YEAR OLD DM recently moved to the Headington area of Oxford seeks other players (aged 20+ please). Will play/DM anything. Contact Mike Thorn, **0805 69529** after 6pm.

COLLECTION of various board games for sale. SAE for list. Also, wanted *Monopoly* games in any condition, age, country. Please write with details. Chris Complin, 'Meadowcroft', Grange Lane, Rushwick, Worcs WR2 5TG.

WANTED Nova Games *Bounty Hunter* gamebooks (except *Shootout at the Saloon*). Other Nova books also considered. Mike, **0246 236906.**

USUTHU! The Battle of Rorke's Drift. £8.95 including P&P, from Valhalla Games, 19 Luke Road, Droylsden, Manchester M35 4FE.

TAKE THAT YOU FIEND!

The monthly postal gaming fanzine from Kevin Warne and John Harrington. Cynical humour and games run by post (*Dreadnought*, *Soccerleague*, *Breaking Away*, *Movie Mogul*, *Wooden Ships & Iron Men*). £2 for 5 issues from Kevin Warne, 8 Charles Street, Grays, Essex RM17 6DX.

WANTED: various games including any Chaosium products (esp. *Pavils*, *Vive L'Empereur*, *Ringworld*, *RuneQuest* system); *Crimea*, 1940, 1942 (GDW); *30YW Quad*, old S&Ts, *Ares* (SPI); *Statue Pro Baseball* cards 1982-4 (Avalon Hill); *Star Smuggler* (Heritage); old issues of *All Star Replay*, *Moves*, *Grenadier*, *Imazines*, *Breakout*, *F&M 3* and *6*, *Battleplan 1*. All lists welcome. Will trade or buy. Mike Siggins, 129 Ardmore Lane, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5SB.

WANTED: Warlord or Apocalypse. Will buy or exchange for other games. J Crawford, **0268 534002.**

COMPUTER GAMES WANTED

Microprose's Command Decision series (*Crusade in Europe*, *Conflict in Vietnam* and *Decision in the Desert*) for the IBM PC. Contact *Games International*, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing, London W5 5DF.

WANTED: Orion (Parker Bros, 1977). Old puzzles: Think-a-dot, Twiddle, Anchor stone puzzles, Instant Insanity/Tantiliser puzzles, puzzle boxes, Wit's End, Meba, Game Jugo, etc. Non-standard Rubik Cubes. Books on puzzles and mathematical recreations, etc. David Singmaster, 87 Rodenhurst Road, London SW4 8AF. **01-674 3674.**

REDUCED PRICES

Due to transit damage we have a number of games in wounded boxes, the games themselves are complete. These are available post-paid at Retail Price less 25%. Avalon Hill, Victory, FASA and Columbia titles only. For details, **0903 773170.**

FOR SALE: *Peggy* (1930s) by Parker Brothers. This is the No 88 edition with rules, wax finish pegs and a 'neutral colored cardboard playing board', and all the pegs. *Bezique* by De La Rue & Co. This includes the 'Pocket guide to Bezique' by Cavenish (which is dated 1869), two sets of cards, two Bezique score boards with rotating metal pointers and the original box. *Lexicon* (1933) by Waddington. This is in a small blue book shaped box with an inner gold coloured sleeve and the cards and rules in vgc. Offers to David, **0253 869278** 6pm to 7.30pm.

CONVENTION DIARY

UK

GAMES FAIR 90. March 30 to April 1, 1990 at Reading University. TSR's residential rolegaming convention always books up very quickly, so contact TSR by phone if you want to make sure they have tickets available. Contact TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB. **0223 212517.**

SENTINEL 90. April 8, 1990 at the King's Hall, Stoke-on-Trent from 10am to 6pm. Wargames and rolegames, trade stalls, participation games and competitions, bring and buy. Organised by the Stoke Wargames Group. Contact P Neale, 6 Emery Avenue, Newcastle, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST5 2JF.

BAYCON. April 13-15, 1990 at a hotel in the Exeter area. Residential boardgame convention in pleasant surroundings. Victor Ludorum tournament (sponsored by GI) and Britannia tournament. For more details contact Bob Mulholland, 16 Codrington St, Newtown, Exeter EX1 2BU.

CAMPAIGN 90. May 12-13, 1990 at Woughton Campus, Milton Keynes. Warhammer, Warhammer 40K and Blood Bowl championships. Contact M A Kay, 117 St Johns Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK3 5DZ.

MANORCON 90. July 20-23, 1990 at High Hall, Birmingham University. Boardgame convention featuring the National Team Diplomacy Championship and

other tournaments. Convention fee £5 or £2 per day. Accommodation available. Contact Richard Walker-dine, 13 Offley Road, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AZ.

CONJUNCTION. July 27-29, 1990 at New Hall College, Cambridge. Relaxed rolegame convention organised like an SF con rather than a selling exercise. £12 attending, B&B £21.50, £5 supporting. Contact Conjunction, c/o 25 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3JD.

ARENA 90. August 25 1990 at the Addison Centre, Addison Park, Kempston, Beds. Wargames and role-playing convention organised by the Bedford Gladiators in association with the Kempston Fun Day and Kempston Lions and Bedfordshire County Council. Wargames, trade stands, role-playing, boardgames, bring and buy and painting competitions. Admission £2, under 14 £1. For further detail, contact Dave Wilkin, **0234 857394** or Ian Fellows, **0234 261254.**

MINDGAMES 90 November 10 and 11, 1990 at the Novotel in Hammersmith. An international showcase for all types of gaming. Contact Simon Titley/Bridget Seddon, Waltham Business Services, 105a Queen Street, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 1LR. **0628 770676.**

GERMANY

SPIEL 90 October 25-28, 1990 at the Grugehalle, Essen. The biggest, the best, still at the same venue. Stay tuned for more details as they come in.

NORTH AMERICA

TOTAL CONFUSION IV February 23-25, 1990 at the Sheraton Worcester Hotel and Conference Center on Lincoln Street in Worcester, MA. Roglegaming convention focussing on tournaments, but with costume contest, miniatures painting and seminars. Contact Total Confusion, PO Box 1463, Worcester, MA 01607 USA.

DIP-CON XXIII June 22 to 24, 1990 at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. America's biggest Diplomacy tournament is also the second World Dipcon. UK gamers who want to go should contact Peter Sullivan, 27 Farrer Street, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 6RG before the end of May 1990.

ORIGINS June 28 to July 1, 1990 at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers, Atlanta, Georgia. The National Gaming Exposition and Trade Show featuring tournaments in all types of gaming, panels, workshops, videos etc. Contact Origins 90, Box 47696, Atlanta GA 30363 USA.

ATLANTICON July 13 to 15, 1990 in Baltimore, Maryland. Details to follow.

GEN CON August 9 to 12, 1990 at the MECCA Convention Center, Milwaukee, Wis. Organised by TSR. Contact 1990 Gen Con Game Fair, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA.

GAMES CLUBS

BEDFORD GLADIATORS Wargaming Association caters for all kinds of rolegames and wargames and meets Mondays from 7pm to 11pm at the BUSA club, The Broadway, Bedford. Contact Dave Wilkin **0234 857394.**

BLACKROD Wargames Society have regular fortnightly meetings. All types of games are played including historical figure wargames, fantasy rolegames and board games. New members welcome with or without any previous experience. Contact: Trains & Things, 170/172, Chorley New Road, Horwich, Nr Bolton, Lancs. **0204 669203** or **691895.**

BRITISH OTHELLO FEDERATION organises tournaments, chooses British champions to play in world championship team, produces instructive and entertaining newsletter twice a year. Contact David Haigh, 62 Romsey Road, Winchester SO 22 5PH.

CAMBRIDGE GAMES CLUB. A new club (18+) for board games, wargames, and rolegames meeting one weekday evening per week. Contact Michael English **0223 440781.**

EVERSHAM Role-play association. Established four years. Every fortnight, any games played. Contact Paul **0386 48202.**

GAMES MEETING every Tuesday at the Bun Shop Pub, Berrylands Rd, Surbiton. 7pm till closing time. Wide variety of board games and role-playing games.

GLC (R.I.P.) Wargames Club meets alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays in room 88, County Hall, on the South Bank, SE1 (nearest tubes Embankment and Waterloo). 6.30 till 10pm. Miniatures, two player board wargames, Warhammer 40K, Pax Britannica, 1830, etc.

KCPFRPG, North London, have meetings every Monday, from 6.30pm to 9.45pm. If you're human, elf, dwarf or just about any other race, and you're between 16 and 25, then contact us straight away. We play AD&D, Rolemaster/MERP, Marvel Superheroes, Robotech, Call of Cthulhu and other games. Experienced and non experienced players welcome. Contact Bil, Naomi or Vince **01-253 6776.** Or write to Darren Rogers, c/o KCPFRPG, 92 Central Street, London EC1V.

NEW MALDEN & SURBITON games group meets every other Monday at the Railway Hotel Pub, Coombe Road, New Malden, 7pm till closing time. Miniature figure wargames include Vietnam, Warhammer 40K and others. Board gamers and role-players welcome. Contact Peter **01-942 5624.**

NOTTINGHAM AND DERBY Games Club meets every Thursday at the Queens Walk Community Centre, The Meadows, Nottingham. 7-10.30pm. Contact Mick Haytack **0332 511898.**

SIGMA GAMES CLUB meets every 2nd, 4th, and 5th (if applicable) Sunday of the month at the Intervarsity Club, Bedford Chambers, King St, Covent Garden, London. 3-10.30pm. Games played include Empire Builder, Talisman, Titan, 1830, and many more.

STOKE-ON-TRENT Wargames Group meets each Friday at 38A Trentham Rd, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent. We have eight rooms permanently set up for gaming and interests run from historical wargames to SF battles to fantasy role-playing. For further details, **01527 615535.**

GERMANY

SPIELRATZN at the Gross Wirt pub every other Friday. Winthirstr. Munich 19, Germany. For further details contact: Bernd Brunnhofe **089 264150.**

FANTASY WORLD Role-playing Club in Munich. For more info contact Detlev Motz, Vorholzerstr. 4, 8000 Munich 71. **089 795244.**

USA

EAST VALLEY Advanced Squad Leader Club. Contact Pierce Ostrander, 5046 E Decatur St, Mesa, AZ 85205. **602 985 4505.**

HEXAGON SOCIETY meets every first and third Saturday From 10am to 6pm. Contact James McCormack, 1450 Harmon Ave, 224c Las Vegas, NV 89119. **702 794 3523 (evenings)**

HISTORICAL SIMULATIONS SOCIETY of Charlottesville, Virginia meets every Friday at 7pm in New Cabell Hall Rm 236. Contact Derek Croxton, 1711 Galloway Drive, Charlottesville VA 22901 **804-296 4897.**

MIAMI GAMING CLUB seeks new members. All types of games. Meetings are once a week from 7pm to 11pm, Thurs or Fri at 7200 SW 7th St Miami. Contact Rex **264 9752**, or Steve **271 5418.**

NEW ORLEANS GAMES CLUB seeks players for all kinds of games. Contact Greg Schloesser, 3800 Brant Drive, Marrero, LA 70072. **504 347 7145.**

NORTH SHORE GAMES CLUB meets once a month somewhere in Massachusetts. Tournaments, food, and even a newsletter.

PENN-JERSEY GAMERS meet monthly and play most games, but no role-playing. Newsletter, tournaments, raffles. Contact Jim Vroom, 2290 Galloway Rd, A-23, Bensalem, PA 19020.

SANTA FE SPRINGS GAMERS ASSOC. looking for new members to play boardgames and Role-Playing games. Tues/Thurs 5-9pm. Saturdays 9am-5pm. at the Town Centre Hall, 11740 E Telegraph Rd, Santa Fe Springs, CA. **213 863 4896** (club hours only).

SCHENECTADY WARGAMERS ASSOCIATION: regular meetings and weekend conventions, tournaments of Axis & Allies, Empire Builder, Machiavelli. Role-playing too. Contact: Eric Paperman, 418 Vliet Blvd. Cohoes, NY 12047. **518 237 5874.**

WASHINGTON GAMERS ASSOC. meets monthly, and publishes a bimonthly newsletter (\$5 for six issues). Contact Dennis Wang, 2200 Huntington Ave, Alexandria, VA 22303. **703 960 1259.**

WINDY CITY WARGAMERS meet twice a month. Miniatures and board wargames, plus newsletter. Louie Tokarz, 5724 W 106th St, Chicago Ridge, IL 60415. **312 857 7060.**

IF YOU'RE LOST

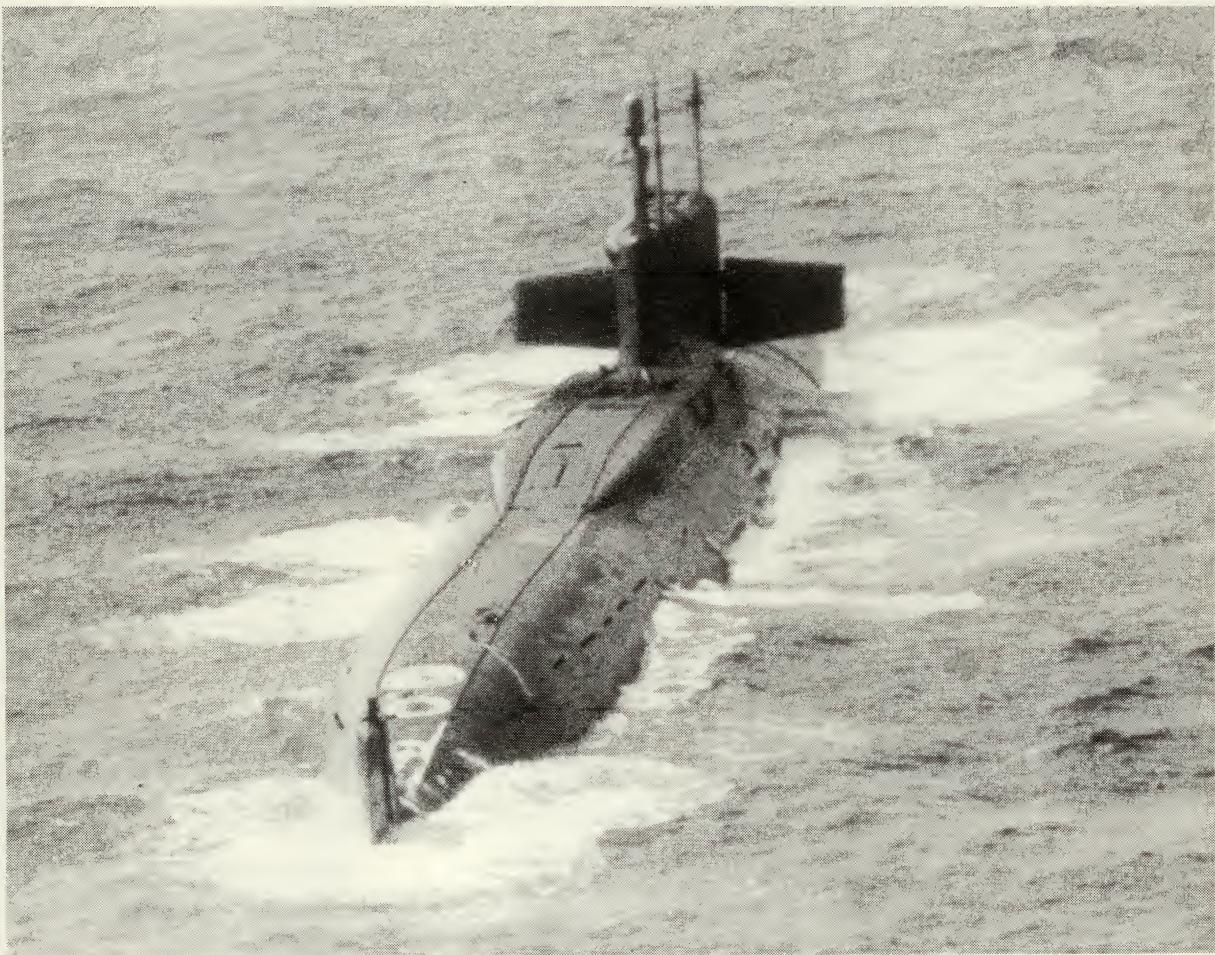


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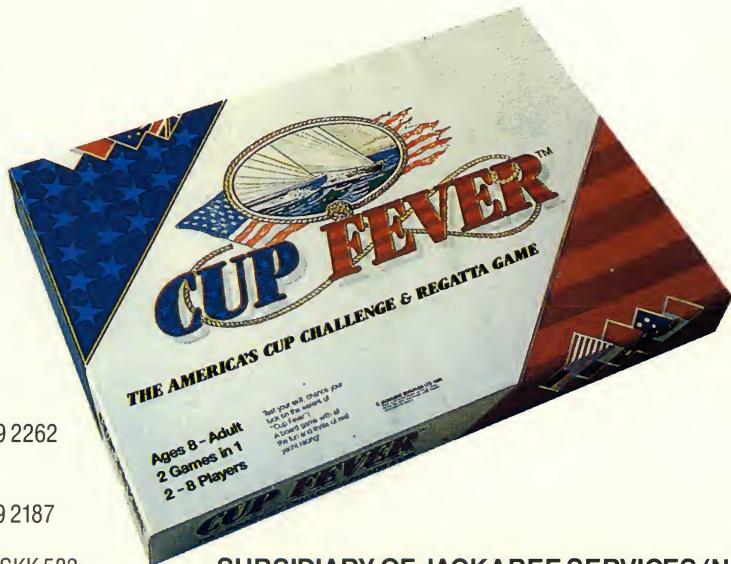
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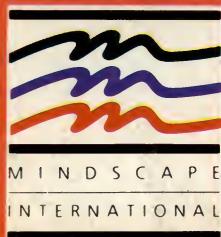
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